

PROTECTING



PARTNERING

PROGRESSING





AMARILLO POLICE DEPARTMENT



MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Amarillo Police Department is to provide excellent public service and effective law enforcement to keep Amarillo safe. We strive to use best practices, strengthen leadership and professionalism, and work in partnership with the community.

VALUES

The values the Amarillo Police Department are committed to upholding are the highest ethical standards through leadership and professional culture. Guided by values of Honor, Truth, Integrity, Service, Courage, and Leadership; we work to earn and maintain the community's trust. We respect individual rights, the needs of the community, and the laws of Texas and the U.S. Our goal is to enhance public safety and communicate effectively to reduce fear of crime.

CORE VALUES

The Amarillo Police Department is committed to service guided by the following Core Values:

HONOR

We commit to fulfill our duties in a manner that reflects professional and personal pride, with respect to the dignity of all.

TRUTH

We commit to being truthful in all matters and transparent in our manner of conducting business.

INTEGRITY

We conduct ourselves in a manner that is consistent with the highest standards of the community.

SERVICE

Our service to the community is guided by a strong sense of fairness and righteousness.

COURAGE

We hold that courage is the mental, moral, and physical strength to overcome fear, and to do what is right. The ability to make tough decisions under stress, pressure, and danger are essential to mission success.

LEADERSHIP

Leadership is the responsibility of public servants. We act as leaders within our community by setting a good example and taking the initiative to solve problems and improve the quality of life in Amarillo.



OATH OF OFFICE

IN THE NAME AND BY THE AUTHORITY OF THE STATE OF TEXAS

I, _____, do solemnly swear (or affirm), that I will faithfully execute the duties of **POLICE OFFICER, CITY OF AMARILLO, STATE OF TEXAS**, and will to the best of my ability preserve, protect, and defend the Constitution and the laws of the United States and of this State, so help me God.

Affiant

**STATE OF TEXAS
COUNTY OF POTTER**



AMARILLO POLICE PERSONNEL

Authorized 2025

Lieutenant	16	Officer	205
Sergeant	70	Reserve Officer	7
Corporal	80	Sworn Officer	352

TOTAL AUTHORIZED STRENGTH

379

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The Amarillo Police Department, 609 South Pierce, ca. 1955

FROM THE CHIEF

It is an honor to serve this community alongside the dedicated men and women of this department. Our mission is centered on a clear priority: protecting the vulnerable from harm and ensuring that every member of our community feels safe, valued, and respected.

We believe that effective policing requires a proactive approach. Through the effective use of technology, data, and strategic enforcement, the Amarillo Police Department works not only to respond to crime, but to prevent it. By deploying resources strategically, focusing on problem-solving, and continually evaluating our practices; the department strives to reduce harm, improve public safety, and serve the community in the most effective way possible.

Equally important is proactive engagement with the community. How we police and how we engage the public is just as important as the outcomes we achieve. Members of this department are expected to treat every person with professionalism, dignity, and respect. Building trust, maintaining legitimacy and working in partnership with the community are fundamental to the mission of this organization.

The Amarillo Police Department is guided by its core values: Truth, Honor, Courage, Integrity, Leadership, and Service. These values are more than words; they represent the expectations placed on every member of the organization and serve as the foundation for decision-making, conduct, and service to the community.

As Chief of Police, I am committed to servant leadership; supporting the men and women of this department, removing obstacles to their success,



and ensuring they have the training, equipment, and leadership necessary to serve this community with excellence. Leadership in this organization is not about rank or position, but about responsibility, accountability, and service to others.

The spirit of the Texas Panhandle has always been defined by a can-do attitude, people who step up, take responsibility, help their neighbors, and face challenges head-on. That same spirit is reflected in the men and women of this department, who are committed to protecting the community, supporting one another, and continuously moving the organization forward.

The Amarillo Police Department remains committed to professionalism, proactive policing, community partnership, and continuous improvement in service to the Amarillo community.

THOMAS HOVER, CHIEF OF POLICE

KEY PIECES OF ADVICE

For Successfully Pursuing A Career In Law Enforcement

EDUCATE

Build knowledge for the job.

ENDURE

Handle stress and challenges.

PREPARE

Get ready for academy demands.

TRAIN

Stay physically prepared.

EXPERIENCE

Gain real-world exposure.

LEARN

Keep improving your skills.

COMMUNICATE

Share information clearly.

UPHOLD

Follow laws and ethics.

INTEGRITY

Do what is right, always.

IN ORDER BY RANK

EXECUTIVE COMMAND STAFF



Chief of Police
THOMAS HOVER



Assistant Chief of Police
JIMMY JOHNSON



Assistant Chief of Police
JOSEPH LOFTUS

DIVISION COMMANDERS



Patrol
CAPT. ERICK BOHANNON



Specialized Operations
CAPT. CLAY ROLAN



Criminal Investigations
CAPT. ARIC HOWARD



Training & Personnel
CAPT. LOUIS SANCHEZ

CIVILIAN COMMAND STAFF



WALLECIA GIBSON

TRANSPARENCY



The Amarillo Police Department remains steadfast in its commitment to fostering trust, strengthening relationships, and maintaining open lines of communication with the citizens of the Amarillo community. Recognizing that public trust is the foundation of effective policing, the department continues to prioritize transparency, accountability, and meaningful engagement in all of its interactions.

Central to this commitment is the department's adherence to the core pillars of procedural justice: *fairness, voice, transparency, and impartiality*. These guiding principles shape how officers serve the community, ensuring that all individuals

are treated with dignity and respect, that their concerns are heard, and that departmental actions are conducted openly and without bias. By embedding these values into daily operations, the department works to build confidence and legitimacy in its practices.

As the department looks to the future, it will continue to build upon these practices, reinforcing its dedication to service, accountability, and community collaboration. Through sustained engagement and a commitment to procedural justice, the Amarillo Police Department strives to create a safer, more inclusive environment for all residents.



ADMINISTRATION

ADMINISTRATION

The Administration Section of the Amarillo Police Department provides leadership and oversight for the department's overall operations, personnel, and long-term planning. It plays a central role in guiding the organization's direction and ensuring its continued effectiveness.

This section is responsible for department-wide planning, budgeting, policy development, and organizational management. It works to ensure that resources are allocated efficiently and in alignment with the department's mission and priorities.

Led by the Chief of Police and supported by two Assistant Chiefs and administrative staff, the

Administration Section also oversees key support functions, including the Public Information Office, Internal Affairs, and Fleet Management.

Through these efforts, the Administration Section promotes accountability, operational efficiency, and transparency while supporting the department's commitment to serving the community.

OPERATIONS BUREAU

Assistant Chief Jimmy Johnson oversees the Operations Bureau, which includes both the Patrol Division and the Specialized Operations Division.

The Patrol Division provides essential first-response services through marked units and proactive patrols across all city neighborhoods.

The Specialized Operations Division focuses on targeted problem-solving, covert investigations, and the coordination of specialized emergency response teams.

The Assistant Chief also supervises the Amarillo Regional Crime Center (ARCC) Intelligence and Analysis Unit, which supports data-driven and strategic policing efforts.

INVESTIGATION AND STAFF SERVICES BUREAU

Assistant Chief Joe Loftus oversees the Investigation and Staff Services Bureau, including the Criminal Investigations Division and the Training and Personnel Division, which encompasses the Police Academy.

Additional responsibilities include the Records Division, Fleet Management, Public Information Office, and Internal Affairs.

BUDGETING AND STAFFING

The Amarillo Police Department had an operating budget for the 2025/2026 budget year that is \$67,590,276. The department continues to apply for grants to supplement operations and equipment.

The department received the 2023 COPS Hiring Program grant, which provided \$500,000 in funding to support four additional police positions over the past three years. Three of these positions were added to the Neighborhood Police Unit, now known as the Community Engagement Unit, and one was added to the Amarillo Regional Crime Center.

These additions support the department's mission to reduce violent crime and increase community engagement. The federal funds for this grant are expected to be exhausted before the end of the 2025/2026 budget year.

The department's authorized strength is 379 police officer positions, and it is authorized 78 full-time professional staff positions.

POLICE FLEET MANAGEMENT

The Police Department operates a fleet of vehicles designed to maximize service efficiency. The majority are marked black-and-white patrol units—primarily Ford Police Interceptor SUVs—assigned to frontline response. Additional vehicles support administrative, investigative, and call-out functions; these are typically unmarked but often equipped with emergency lighting.

The fleet is partially renewed each year based on mileage and service life. Most vehicles are purchased and maintained by the City of Amarillo Fleet Services, while certain specialty vehicles are acquired directly by the department. Patrol vehicles assigned to schools are largely purchased and maintained by the Amarillo and Canyon Independent School Districts.



INTERNAL AFFAIRS

It is the policy of this Department to thoroughly investigate all complaints, whether they are made against Department members or related to Department policies and procedures, regardless of the source. This policy includes a regulated, fair, and impartial Internal Affairs (IA) program responsible for determining the validity of such complaints. If warranted, the Department will take appropriate corrective action.

In addition, IA is tasked with producing quarterly and annual reports on Use of Force incidents, as well as an annual Pursuit Review report. IA is also responsible for investigating all officer-involved shootings and in-custody deaths.

Complaints from citizens and complaints from within the Department are investigated by the Internal Affairs Investigators.

During 2025, there were: **366** complaints investigated. After investigation, **150** complaints were sustained. **185** complaints were exonerated or unfounded. **14** complaints were not sustained, and **17** complaints are pending review. Each of the **150** sustained complaints resulted in disciplinary action of some type.

There were **2** officer involved shooting incidents involving a total of **3** officers. The actions by all officers were found to be justified and resulted in no action being taken by a Grand Jury.



There were **5** animal shootings in 2025. There were **0** in-custody deaths in 2025. There were **2** unintentional discharges of firearm investigations for 2025.

There are **17** open investigations for 2025 that are still being reviewed, and no finding or disciplinary action has been decided.

Disciplinary action was taken on all sustained complaints. Such action includes verbal counseling, written reprimands, suspensions, and terminations.

INCIDENT BASED REPORT

YEARLY REPORT

Offense	2025	2024	% Change
Homicide	12	15	-20%
Rape	138	142	-3%
Robbery	142	174	-18%
Aggravated Assault	818	1051	-22%
Burglary	656	761	-14%
Larceny Theft	3666	4047	-9%
Stolen Vehicles	471	529	-11%
TOTAL	5903	6719	-11%



Northern District of Texas

ProjectSafe Neighborhoods



The PSN Target Enforcement Area (TEA) saw a 35% reduction in violent crime in 2025, higher than the 6% reduction citywide.

Non-family aggravated assaults made up a higher percentage of violent crimes in the PSN TEA (59%) compared to the remainder of Amarillo (56%), while family aggravated assaults were a smaller portion in the TEA (18%) compared to the citywide figure (27%). Monthly trends revealed increases in violent crime in the first half of 2025 increasing from 159 in Q1 to 224 in Q2.

CRIME TYPE BREAKDOWN

- **NON-FAMILY AGGRAVATED ASSAULTS:** Reduced by 37% in the TEA, compared to a 3% decrease citywide.
- **FAMILY AGGRAVATED ASSAULTS:** Decreased by 41% in the TEA, compared to an 8% reduction citywide.
- **AGGRAVATED SEXUAL ASSAULTS:** Decreased in the TEA from 7 reported incidents in 2024 to 6 in 2025, while there was a decrease citywide from (23 to 11).

- **AGGRAVATED ROBBERIES:** The TEA saw a significant 23% decrease, while the remainder of the city saw a 10% increase.

- **NON-AGGRAVATED ROBBERIES:** Decreased by 17% in the PSN area, while citywide, the decrease was 37%.

- **MURDERS:** Decreased in the PSN area from 8 in 2024, to 5 in 2025. A 38% decrease in the TEA. Contrary to the citywide trend, which saw an increase from 6 in 2024 to 7 in 2025.

IMPACT AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The PSN TEA achieved a 35% reduction in violent crime in 2025, significantly outperforming the citywide decline and reflecting the effectiveness of focused enforcement efforts. Despite these gains, non-family aggravated assaults continue to account for the majority of violent crime within the TEA. The mid-year increase in incidents highlights the need for sustained, intelligence-led enforcement and prevention strategies to address emerging trends and maintain long-term reductions.

PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICE

The Public Information Office (PIO) serves as a vital connection between the Amarillo Police Department and the community. This five-person unit is responsible for educating the public, promoting crime prevention, and maintaining open and transparent communication between the department and the citizens it serves.

The PIO team consists of Sergeant Carla Burr, PIO Supervisor; Corporal Carmela Ogden; Corporal Scott Welling, Amarillo Crime Stoppers Coordinator; Officer Jarrod Robertson, Student Crime Stoppers of Amarillo Coordinator; and Ashley Hicks, Professional Staff/Administrative Assistant. Together, the team works to provide timely, accurate information while supporting community education and engagement efforts across Amarillo.

The primary focus of the PIO is public education and crime prevention. The unit provides presentations and training on a wide range of topics, including traffic safety, sexual assault awareness, workplace safety, and crime prevention strategies based on current local trends and law enforcement expertise. Many businesses and organizations schedule recurring PIO presentations as part of their employee safety education programs. In addition, the PIO conducts free home and business security surveys for Amarillo residents, ensuring community members have access to practical tools to help protect their property. The unit also offers specialized training for specific groups such as realtors, social workers, bank employees, and utility service workers. As concerns regarding workplace violence and active attack scenarios continue to grow, the PIO regularly conducts site visits and tailored training sessions to help organizations prepare for and mitigate potential risks.

In 2025, the Amarillo Police Department established the Community Engagement Unit, and the PIO works closely with this team to strengthen relationships and outreach efforts throughout the city. Many of the programs, activities, and community engagements



conducted by both units complement one another, allowing APO to expand its reach and provide consistent, meaningful engagement with residents.

The PIO is actively involved in youth and community programs, including the Citizen Police Academy, Student Police Academy, and the APO Summer Camp. The unit also participates in youth-focused initiatives and collaborates with organizations such as Leadership Amarillo and other community groups interested in learning more about APO operations. These efforts promote transparency, build trust, and foster mutual understanding between the department and the community.

In addition to community outreach, the PIO serves as the department's official voice by keeping the public informed through social media, media releases, and ongoing communication regarding APO operations and activities. Through these efforts, the Public Information Office works diligently to educate, inform, and support the community while promoting safety, crime prevention, and public trust.

AMARILLO CRIME STOPPERS



Through the collective efforts of the public and our law enforcement partners, Amarillo Crime Stoppers had a successful 2025. Tips that came into the program lead to **74** arrests, **163** cases cleared, **22** weapons recovered, **9** stolen vehicles recovered, and a total of \$327,200 worth of stolen property recovered. Our success is a direct result of community tips, strong partnerships, and the tireless work of law enforcement. Amarillo Crime Stoppers extends its gratitude to the community for its continued support.



Amarillo Crime Stoppers was founded in 1979. They are certified by the Texas Crime Stoppers Council and cover all of Potter, Randall, Carson, and Armstrong County. As always, if you have information on an unsolved crime or the location of a fugitive, call **806-374-4400**. You can also submit your anonymous tip at amapolice.org or by using the P3 Tips App.

The 19th Annual “Shred It Day” is scheduled for April 11th, and the 18th Annual “Crime Stoppers Car Show” is September 5th. We look forward to the community’s continued support and a successful year in 2026. “Say It Here” with Amarillo Crime Stoppers!



Through the continued efforts of our students, community members, and law enforcement partners, **Student Crime Stoppers of Amarillo** experienced one of its most successful years to date. In 2025, the program received 795 tips from the nine school districts it serves — Amarillo ISD, Canyon ISD, Bushland ISD, River Road ISD, Highland Park ISD, Panhandle ISD, Groom ISD, White Deer ISD, and Claude ISD — representing approximately 53,000 students.

The year began with strong participation across our coverage area. Information provided through tips in 2025 led to **22** arrests, **447** cases cleared, and the recovery of two weapons. Tips also resulted in **342** underage tobacco possession cases, **175** drug possession cases, and four alcohol possession cases involving minors, along with multiple reports addressing threats to school safety and violations of school policies. In total, the program helped remove an estimated \$5,700 worth of drugs and

other dangerous substances from our schools and community, while paying out more than \$7,780 in rewards.

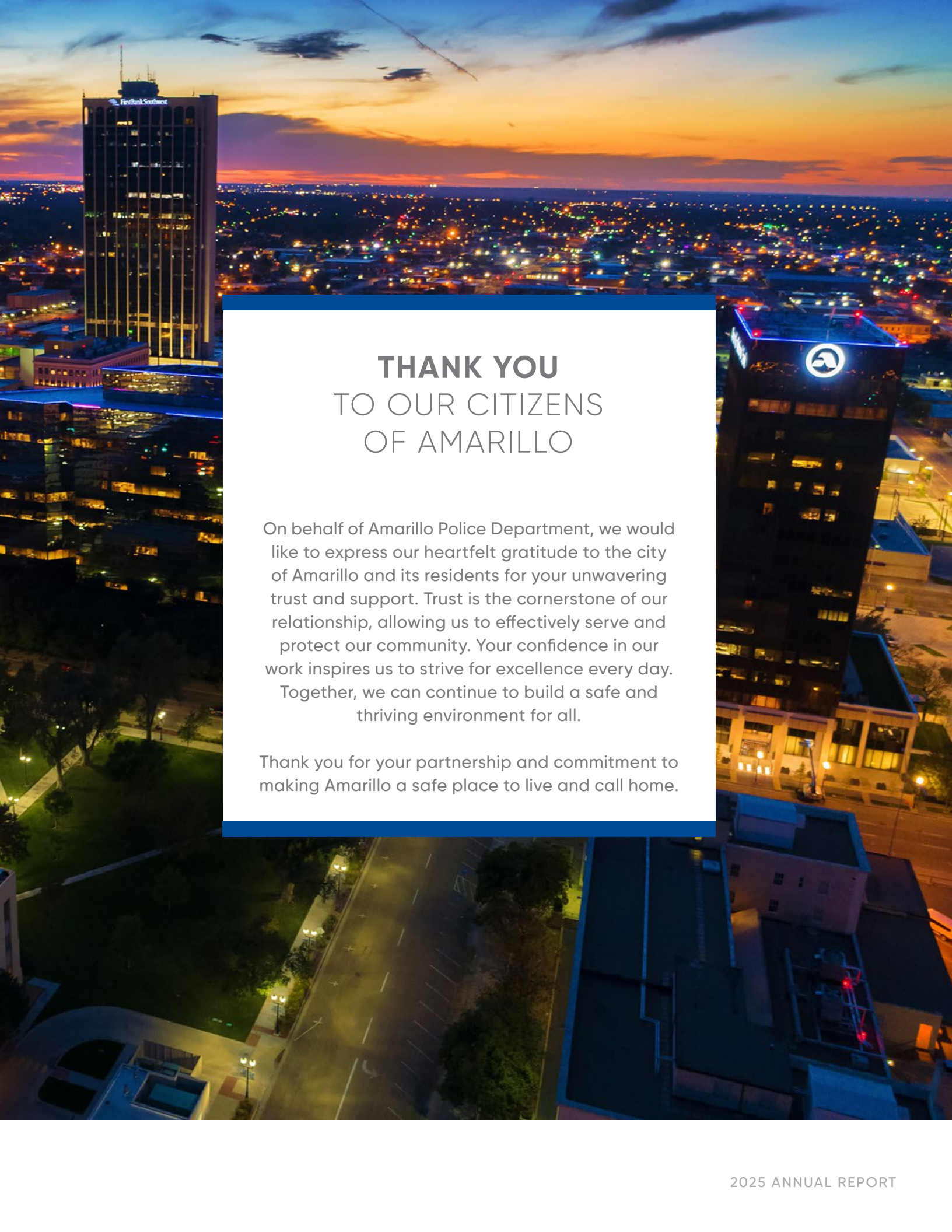
These results reflect the trust placed in the program by our students and the dedication of school staff, community members, and law enforcement partners who work together every day to keep our schools safe. Student Crime Stoppers of Amarillo is grateful for the continued support that makes this work possible. Founded in 1991, Student Crime Stoppers of Amarillo is certified by the Texas Crime Stoppers Council and proudly serves Potter, Randall, Carson, and Armstrong Counties.

If you have information related to an unsolved case or concerns involving the safety and security of students or school staff, please call **806-372-8477** (TIPS). Tips can also be submitted anonymously at www.scssofarillo.com or through the P3 Tips App.

Upcoming 2026 Fund raisers

- 19th Annual Shred-It Day-April 11, 2026
- 4th Annual Race-A-Cop-July 11, 2026
- 18th Annual Amarillo Crime Stoppers Car Show-September 5, 2026

Thank you for standing with Student Crime Stoppers of Amarillo and supporting the safety of our students and community. "See It. Say It."

An aerial night photograph of Amarillo, Texas. On the left, the FirstBank Center is a tall, illuminated skyscraper. The city lights stretch across the middle ground to the horizon under a twilight sky. In the foreground, a city street with a parking lot and some trees is visible. On the right side, another building with a glowing circular logo is partially visible.

THANK YOU TO OUR CITIZENS OF AMARILLO

On behalf of Amarillo Police Department, we would like to express our heartfelt gratitude to the city of Amarillo and its residents for your unwavering trust and support. Trust is the cornerstone of our relationship, allowing us to effectively serve and protect our community. Your confidence in our work inspires us to strive for excellence every day. Together, we can continue to build a safe and thriving environment for all.

Thank you for your partnership and commitment to making Amarillo a safe place to live and call home.



ARCC



ARCC

AMARILLO REGIONAL CRIME CENTER

AMARILLO REGIONAL CRIME CENTER

The Amarillo Regional Crime Center (ARCC) was officially finished on February 28th, 2025 and City Manager Grayson Path, along with Deputy City Manager Andrew Freeman and members of City Council were present for the ribbon cutting.

The ARCC is comprised of Operations, Intelligence and Analysis, and Digital Forensics and is assigned to the Operations Bureau under the command of Lt. Shane Chadwick.

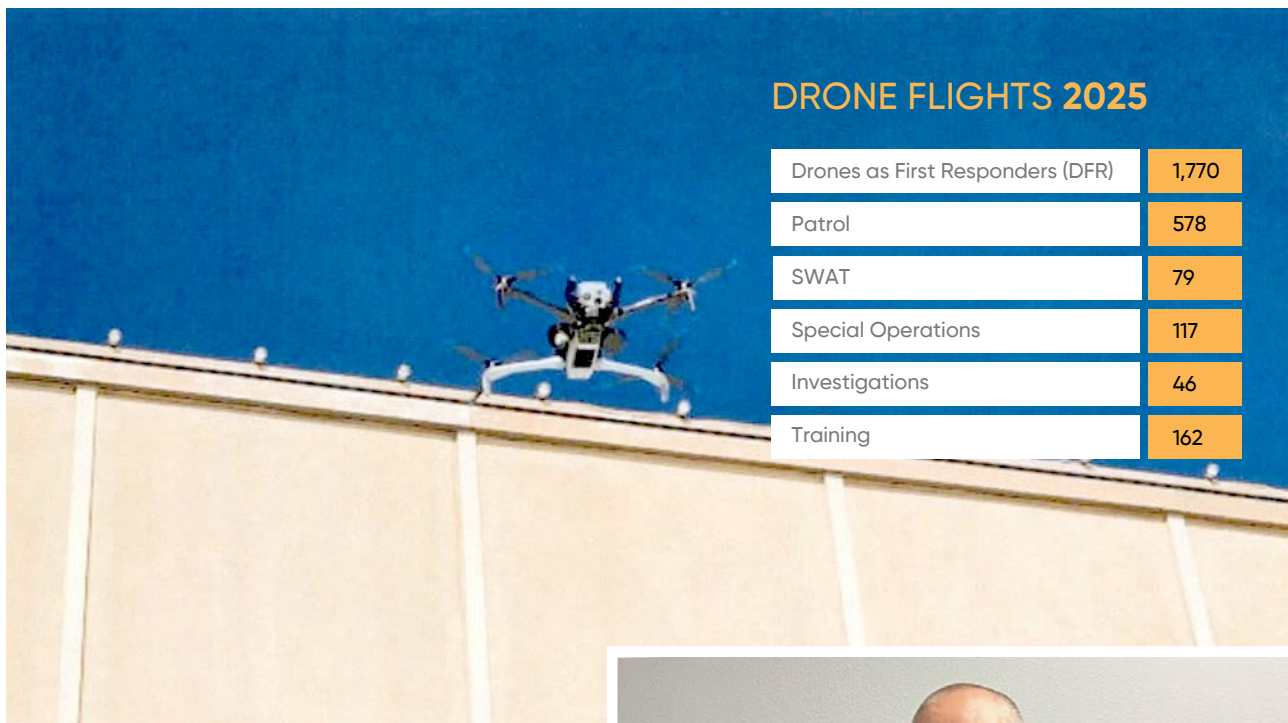
OPERATIONS UNIT

The operation unit is comprised of Sergeant Craig Cothrin, who supervises operations, and the Digital Forensic Unit (DFU). Operators are Ofc. Jeff Dorris and Ofc. Autin McGee.

The ARCC is supported by Technology Officer Cpl. Jeffrey Roden. The Operational Unit are responsible for the research and procurement of technology and resources, as well as its maintenance and deployment, for the Amarillo Police Department. This includes platforms like the License Plate Recognition platform, Intersection Cameras, Drones and Drones as First Responders platforms, as well as a host of software platforms designed to enhance investigative capabilities and assist in real-time crime strategies.

As a regional asset, the ARCC assists law enforcement agencies across the Panhandle of Texas as well as federal and state partners.





DRONE FLIGHTS 2025

Drones as First Responders (DFR)	1,770
Patrol	578
SWAT	79
Special Operations	117
Investigations	46
Training	162

INTELLIGENCE & ANALYSIS UNIT (IAU)

The Intelligence and Analysis Unit received 643 requests for intelligence products through IRIS in 2025 to include intelligence requests, bulletins, and statistics.

We currently have 338 users including members of TDCJ, PCSO, RCSO, TxDPS, Dumas PD, Canyon PD, Cactus PD, DOE, FBI, DEA, ATF, USDOJ, Hall County SO, VA, Pampa PD, Gray County SO, Carson County SO, ICE, HSI and Amarillo ISO.

DIGITAL FORENSIC UNIT (IAU)

The Digital Forensic Unit is supervised by Sgt. Craig Cothrin and staffed by Digital Forensic Analyst Lorraine Matthyse, Digital Forensic Technician Chloe Marmitt, and Ofc. Daymond Rutherford. This unit responded to 402 requests in 2025 comprised of cell phone extractions and video acquisitions.



An aerial night photograph of a city skyline, predominantly in shades of blue. The city is illuminated by numerous lights from buildings and streets, creating a dense pattern of light against the dark sky. In the upper left, a tall, slender skyscraper stands out. To its right, a large, dark building features a prominent, glowing circular logo on its upper facade. The word "PATROL" is superimposed in large, white, bold, sans-serif capital letters across the center of the image. The foreground shows a mix of urban structures, including parking lots and smaller commercial buildings, all bathed in the cool blue light of the night.

PATROL

PATROL

The Patrol Division provides police services twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week within the city limits of Amarillo.

Captain Erick Bohannon commands the Patrol Division which has three overlapping ten-hour watches (days, evenings, and midnights). He also oversees the K-9 Unit and the Honor Guard within the division. Additionally, a lieutenant assigned to Patrol serves in an advisory capacity at the Amarillo Emergency Communication Center (AECC).

UNITS

HONOR GUARD	K-9	AECC
POLICE RESERVE PROGRAM	FIELD TRAINING OFFICER (FTO)	



HONOR GUARD

The Amarillo Police Department Honor Guard serves as the ceremonial unit for the department at major events such as memorial ceremonies, parades, and funerals.

AECC

The Amarillo Emergency Communication Center (AECC) answers phone calls for Police, Fire, Animal Management and Welfare, and medical services.



K-9

The Patrol Division has four officers that are assigned to a K-9 partner. There is a K-9 on each shift and a supervisor that oversees their daily activities. The K-9 sergeant also manages the division's **Field Training Officer (FTO)** program.

POLICE RESERVE PROGRAM

The Amarillo Police Department implemented a Police Reserve Officer program. The reserve officers are TCOLE licensed peace officers subject to the state and department training mandates. Reserve officers volunteer their time to assist the department in various investigative and patrol functions as needed. Each reserve officer is required to volunteer a minimum of forty hours per year to maintain their reserve status.

The image is a full-page background photograph with a strong green color cast. It depicts three individuals in tactical gear, including helmets and balaclavas, holding assault rifles. They are positioned in a modern office or control room environment, with computer monitors and office furniture visible in the background. The lighting is dramatic, with the subjects silhouetted against the brighter background.

SPECIALIZED OPERATIONS

SPECIALIZED OPERATIONS



The mission of the Specialized Operations Division is to support the Patrol and Criminal Investigation Division by providing directed and covert operations. The division's three operational segments include Covert/Tactical Operations, Directed Operations and Community Engagement. The division is also responsible for the Gang Intelligence Unit and the highly trained underwater dive team, both essential to its operations.

UNITS COVERT/TACTICAL OPERATIONS

SWAT	BOMB	TASK FORCE OFFICERS (TFO)	CRISIS NEGOTIATION TEAM	NARCOTICS
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NARCOTICS

The primary mission of the Narcotics Unit is combating the distribution and use of all controlled substances. Paralleling investigations include VICE operations to combat human trafficking. The unit conducts undercover operations, gathers intelligence, conduct extensive surveillance, utilize informants, and build cases for prosecution at both the state and federal level.



NARC STATISTICS 2022-2025

OPERATIONS

	2022	2023	2024	2025
Undercover Operations	45	40	48	11
Res./Bus. Search Warrants	28	26	36	61
Asset Forfeiture Cases	13	12	23	24
Narcotics Arrests	545	596	623	477
Overdose Death Investigations	5	12		13

SUBSTANCE (weight/gg)

	2022	2023	2024	2025
Amphetamine	7.19	85.21	49.67	5.09
Cocaine	4,144.84	10,404.37	7,356.42	21,667.42
Crack Cocaine	154.7	49.87	154.65	88.83
Fentanyl	12,597	14,195.74	2,871.98	6,957.2
Hallucinogenics (LSD/PCP/DMT)	0.5	3,462.93	0.6	0.0
Heroin	317.45	56.34	14.65	3,020.13
Marijuana	220,738.24	37,475.06	108,951.07	110,132.97
Methamphetamine	29,620.33	49,242.43	86,532.24	50,246.33
Prescription Pills	688.91	617.19	25,589.57	382.62
Psilocybin	297.14	908.99	2,603.54	607.3

“

There has been a **100% increase in cases from 2022 to 2025**. This is directly related to the way Sgt. Bacon has lead his team and their investigation techniques over the last two years.”

— LT. KEVIN KORINEK



The Narcotics Unit plays a critical role in addressing drug-related issues within our community, aiming to reduce the availability and harmful impact of illegal substances.

Interagency coordination is a cornerstone of our unit's operations that often has over-lapping jurisdictions that span local, state, and federal

boundaries. Collaboration with these agencies continues to enhance the unit's ability to disrupt, disorganize, and dismantle criminal organizations, prosecute offenders, and address broader public safety concerns associated with drug abuse and criminal activity.

A statue of Lady Justice, blindfolded and holding scales, with a red overlay.

DIRECTED OPERATIONS

DIRECTED OPERATIONS

CIT officers have been assigned **1,482 mental health-related cases** for follow-up, a decrease despite the expected increase in population."

UNITS

PROACTIVE CRIMINAL
ENFORCEMENT (PACE)

GANG INTELLIGENCE
UNIT

CRISIS INTERVENTION
TEAM (CIT)

CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM (CIT)

The Amarillo Police Department CIT is known throughout the region as subject matter experts on crisis intervention. Outside agencies often consult CIT to provide training and guidance. The unit partners with Texas CIT, which provides resources and training opportunities in crisis intervention. APD CIT officers provide mental health education for the Amarillo Police Department. CIT trains recruits in the Amarillo Police Academy and provides updates to APD officers during in-service and periodic muster training. APD CIT partners with several outside entities, including Texas Panhandle Centers, which provides three case

managers as part of the Intercept Program funded by HB 13 and LOSS (Local Outreach for Survivors of Suicide) Team. The Texas Panhandle Centers run the Diversion Center located at 6600 Kilgore, which has also been instrumental in assisting CIT with caring for clients in the community and keeping individuals out of the criminal justice system. As of 12/31/2025, CIT officers have been assigned 1,482 mental health-related cases for follow-up, a decrease despite the expected increase in population. These cases are generated not only by CIT officers but also by officers throughout the police department, and information gained from outside agencies for individuals in the jurisdiction.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

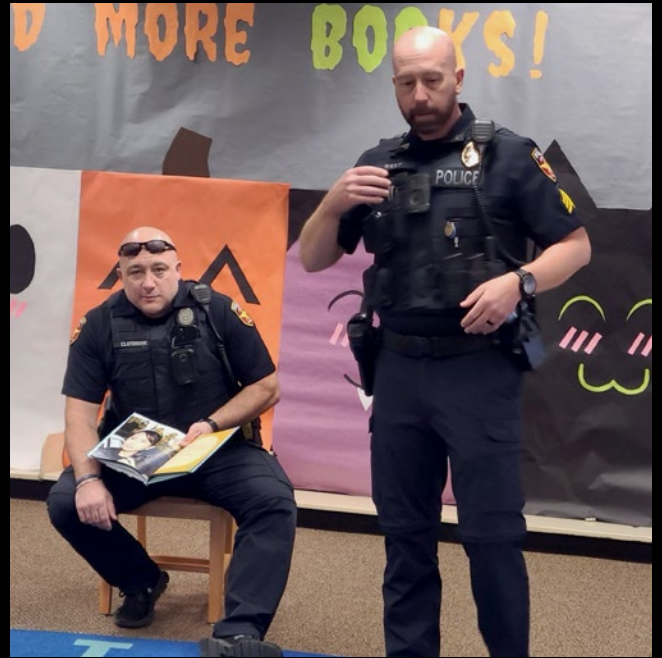


UNITS

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT / MOTORS

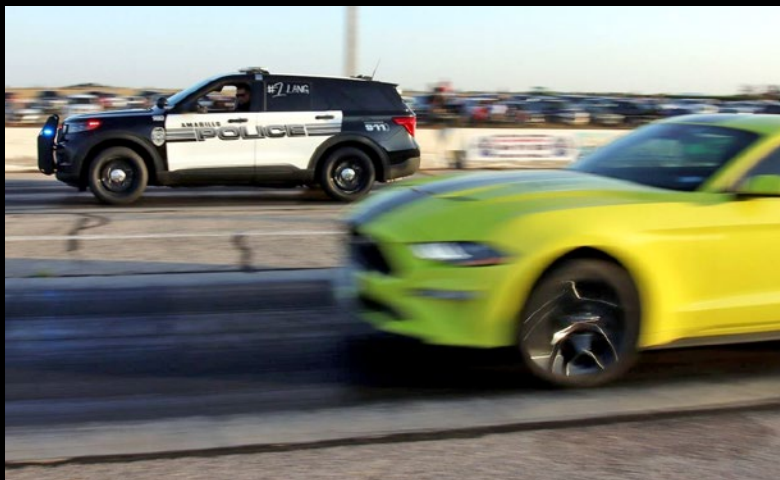
The Community Engagement segment was restructured in 2025 but retained its goal to address crime and quality of life issues through community-based solutions. Led by Lt. Pennington, this division includes the Community Engagement Unit and the Motors Unit. The Community Engagement Unit provides outreach opportunities to the citizens of Amarillo in a more non-traditional fashion where a call for service is not necessary. This unit achieves its mission through participating in community events, partnering with formal and informal leaders in the city, and addressing complex issues throughout the city. The Motors Unit provides high visibility traffic enforcement with the goal of making Amarillo roadways safer for all to enjoy. The Motors Unit is also highly active in engaging the citizens they serve by partnering with the Community Engagement Unit at events, providing escorts, and participating in multiple parades throughout the year.





COMMUNITY





ENGAGEMENT





Amarillo Police Motorcycle Squad (MOTORS)

The Amarillo Police Motorcycle Squad is dedicated to enhancing community safety and traffic enforcement by strategically deploying highly trained motorcycle officers around the city. The primary goal of Motorcycle Squad is to reduce traffic crashes and increase compliance with traffic laws. The Motorcycle squad is tasked with high visibility enforcement of traffic laws in the areas where crashes most occur. Additionally, the squad deploys according to community complaints, school zones and other high-risk thoroughfares. The Motorcycle Squad regularly works DWI patrol during peak holidays. The squad includes 1 Sergeant Supervisor and 10 Officers. The Motorcycle Squad regularly works the STEP Comprehensive and CMV grants annually. This annual report provides an overview of the unit's activities and accomplishments during the fiscal year January 2025 through December 2025.



A full-page background image with a blue tint. It depicts a skeleton wearing a diver's cap and mask, sitting on a large rock underwater. The skeleton is holding a long, dark, cylindrical object, possibly a pipe or a tool, diagonally across its body. The water is clear, and the lighting is soft, creating a somber and mysterious atmosphere.

DIVE TEAM

DIVE TEAM



The Amarillo Police Department Dive Team is a part-time team comprised of officers who are assigned other duties within the department. The officers volunteer to be members of the team. They complete a physical readiness assessment and a diving skills check annually. The divers are trained in-house by a PADI Master Scuba Diver Trainer up to a level of a Rescue Diver. Several of the divers are also trained as swift water technicians.

The team responds to water related incidents including urban flooding, water rescues, underwater investigations, evidence recovery, vehicle recovery and body recovery. Diving incidents typically occur in limited to zero visibility conditions. The team undergoes monthly training in the areas of dive planning, search and recovery procedures, sonar use, underwater communications, evidence collection and body handling & recovery.



CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION



The Criminal Investigation Division is comprised of 90 sworn and 29 professional staff employees. It is primarily tasked with conducting follow-up investigations of alleged criminal offenses occurring within the city of Amarillo.

UNITS CRIMINAL INVESTIGATION DIVISION

HOMICIDE	CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION	SPECIAL VICTIMS	VIOLENT CRIMES	DOMESTIC VIOLENCE
GENERAL INVESTIGATIONS		PROPERTY CRIMES		PROPERTY & EVIDENCE

Relevant investigative techniques may include, but are not limited to, interviewing victims or witnesses and apprehending suspects. They also include interrogating suspects and processing crime scenes for physical and digital evidence. Investigators may work with crime laboratories to analyze evidence, locate and recover stolen property, conduct surveillance, and coordinate sting operations.

Investigators prepare criminal cases and present them to the appropriate municipal, county, and district attorney's offices for prosecution. The investigators may later be called upon to provide courtroom testimony in support of these prosecutions.

The Criminal Investigation Division includes the following specialized investigative units: Homicide, Crime Scene Investigators, Special Victims, Violent Crimes, Domestic Violence, General Investigations, and Property Crimes. General Investigations includes the Juvenile, Traffic Investigations, and School Resource Officers units. Property Crimes includes the Civilian Investigators, Burglary, Theft, and Financial Crimes units. The Criminal Investigation Division is also home to the Property & Evidence Unit.



HOMICIDE

The Amarillo Police Department Homicide Unit is comprised of several specialized teams that work collaboratively to investigate complex and serious crimes. The unit is currently supervised by Lieutenant James Clements.

HOMICIDE UNITS

COLD CASE UNIT

CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION UNIT

NATIONAL INTEGRATED BALLISTICS INFORMATION NETWORK (NIBIN)

The Homicide Unit includes five primary investigators responsible for handling active cases. These investigators are assigned to a range of incidents, including homicides, infant deaths, fire-related deaths, suicides, overdoses, suspicious deaths, and other investigations as directed by the Chief of Police.

The Amarillo Police Department Homicide clearance rate for the combined past five years is 90.65%. The Homicide clearance rate for the State of Texas ranges around 53% to 60%.

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT

The Homicide Unit's administrative functions are handled by one Administrative Assistant III. This civilian position provides support to all components of the unit, including Homicide Investigators, the Cold Case Unit, CSIU, NIBIN, the Evidence Specialist, and the Digital Forensic Media Technician. Responsibilities include managing timekeeping and overtime, coordinating training and travel, compiling case statistics and data, maintaining case file inventories, and handling other essential administrative duties.

Support Staff

The Homicide Unit is further supported by one Homicide Evidence Specialist and one Digital Forensic Media Technician.

- **The Homicide Evidence Specialist**, a civilian position, manages all physical homicide evidence. Responsibilities include documenting, booking, and preparing evidence for forensic analysis, assisting the Cold Case Unit with historical evidence retrieval, and maintaining inventory and disposition of homicide evidence stored in the main evidence warehouse.
- **The Digital Forensic Media Technician**, a sworn officer, collects, processes, and prepares all digital media for investigations and court proceedings. Duties include downloading and analyzing cell phones and computers, drafting search warrants, collecting surveillance footage, and assisting investigators with all digital media requests. This technician is also on 24-hour call and responds to all homicides and major incidents.

COLD CASE UNIT

Established in 2022, the Cold Case Unit is staffed by one Sergeant Investigator who oversees all unsolved homicides, long-term missing person cases, and murder suspects who have absconded. The unit also includes one civilian volunteer. The Cold Case Unit collaborates closely with external agencies such as the Texas Attorney General's Office, the Texas Rangers Cold Case Division, the Department of Public Safety (DPS) Labs, and various specialized forensic laboratories.



CRIME SCENE INVESTIGATION UNIT (CSIU)

The Crime Scene Investigation Unit (CSIU) plays a vital role within the Homicide Unit. It is composed of one Sergeant Supervisor, two sworn Crime Scene Investigators, and five civilian Crime Scene Technicians.

CSIU is responsible for documenting and collecting evidence at all major crime scenes, attending autopsies, and assisting Homicide Investigators with evidence preparation for Grand Jury presentations. Members of CSIU are trained experts in areas such as photography, fingerprint analysis, crime scene reconstruction, bloodstain pattern analysis, and more. The unit provides 24-hour support, 365 days a year, responding to major incidents across the department.

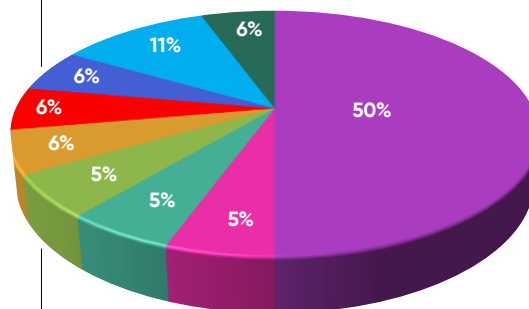


A sincere Thank You to our Crime Scene Investigators for their outstanding — and at times overwhelming—work throughout 2025.

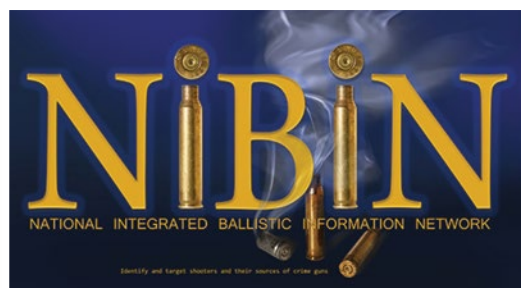
Over the past year, the team responded to a total of 144 call-outs, contributing more than 1,030 hours of dedicated investigative work. This averages to a call-out approximately every 2.5 days. Due to staffing and training demands, many of these hours were carried by just five investigators. Individually, each of those CSIs contributed an average of 206 hours—equivalent to 26 full eight-hour workdays spent solely on call-outs.

All of this was accomplished in addition to their ongoing responsibilities, including court preparation, training, and instruction.

2025 HOMICIDES CAUSE OF DEATH



1	Undetermined	6%
2	Drowning	11%
1	Drugs	6%
1	Fire	6%
1	Motor Vehicle	6%
1	Asphyxia	5%
1	Strangulation	5%
1	Blunt Force Trauma	5%
9	Gunshot	50%



NATIONAL INTEGRATED BALLISTIC INFORMATION NETWORK UNIT (NIBIN)

The National Integrated Ballistic Information Network (NIBIN) Unit also operates under the Homicide Unit. Staffed by one civilian NIBIN Technician, the unit is responsible for test-firing and documenting all firearms collected as evidence. The technician enters test-fired and recovered shell casings into the NIBIN system to identify potential links between firearms, shootings, and homicides.



SPECIAL VICTIMS' UNIT

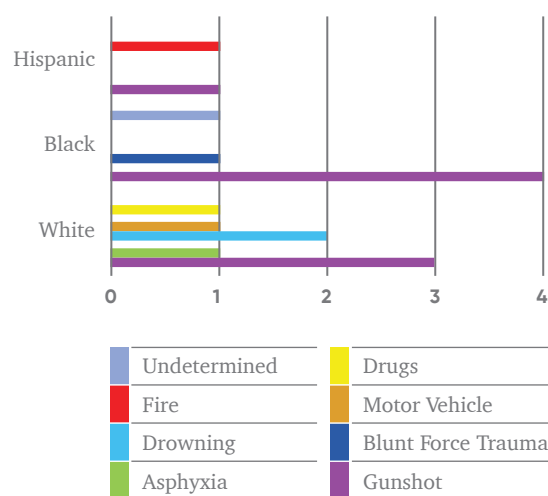
The Special Victims Unit (SVU) is supervised by Lieutenant Chaz Williams. It is currently staffed by nine Detective Sergeants and one Patrolman who serves as the Internet Crimes Against Children (ICAC) Investigator, specializing in National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) tips and related cases.

SVU detectives are tasked with investigating the following criminal offenses: sexual assaults with adult suspects, child-victim crimes with adult suspects, sex offender registration violations, child support and child custody offenses, missing persons including non-habitual runaways under 13 years of age and contributing to the delinquency of a minor offenses. The SVU regularly works closely with partner agencies such as the Texas Department of Family and Protective Services Child Protective Investigations (CPI), Sexual Assault Nurse Examiners (SANE), and The Bridge Children's Advocacy Center.

In 2025, the SVU investigated over 1,592 cases. This figure includes 326 cases involving crimes against children, 220 adult-victim sexual assault cases, 90 sex offender registration cases, 91 missing or endangered persons cases, and 319 interferences with child custody cases. During 2025, the SVU received and investigated 445 tips related to the possession of child sexual abuse material (CSAM) from the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force. In addition to investigating assigned cases, SVU detectives periodically conduct online solicitation of a minor sting operations to help proactively safeguard our community's children.

SVU oversees the sex offender registration program staffed by a Sex Offender Compliance Coordinator. There are currently 704 sex offenders registering with the Amarillo Police Department annually, with 33 of those being transients who are required to register in person each week. Normal registration hours are Monday through Thursday, 0800 hours to 1100 hours and 1400 hours to 1600 hours. Each year, the SVU partners with state and federal agencies to conduct a comprehensive sex offender compliance operation to ensure each individual local sex offender complies with state regulations.

2025 HOMICIDE VICTIMS CAUSE OF DEATH MALES



2025 HOMICIDE VICTIMS CAUSE OF DEATH FEMALES



VIOLENT CRIMES

VCU End of Year Statistics *Year to Date 12/31/25*

- Total Cases 2025: **2927**
- Average Cases per Investigator: **266**
- Presented Cases: **367**
- Cases Clear by Arrest/ In Custody Arrests: **734**
- Cases Refused/Declined: **130**

DOMESTIC VIOLENCE UNIT

The Domestic Violence (DV) Unit is composed of seven Detectives, one Sergeant, and one Professional Staff member (Civilian Investigator).

During calendar year 2025, the DV Unit was assigned a total of 3,528 cases. Of those, 601 cases were assigned to the Professional Staff investigator. The seven Detectives handled the remaining caseload, averaging 418 cases per Detective.

In 2025, the DV Unit cleared 1,228 cases through the following methods:

- A. Submitted for prosecution
 - B. Cleared by arrest
 - C. Cleared by arrest through another agency
- Additionally, 274 cases were refused for prosecution.

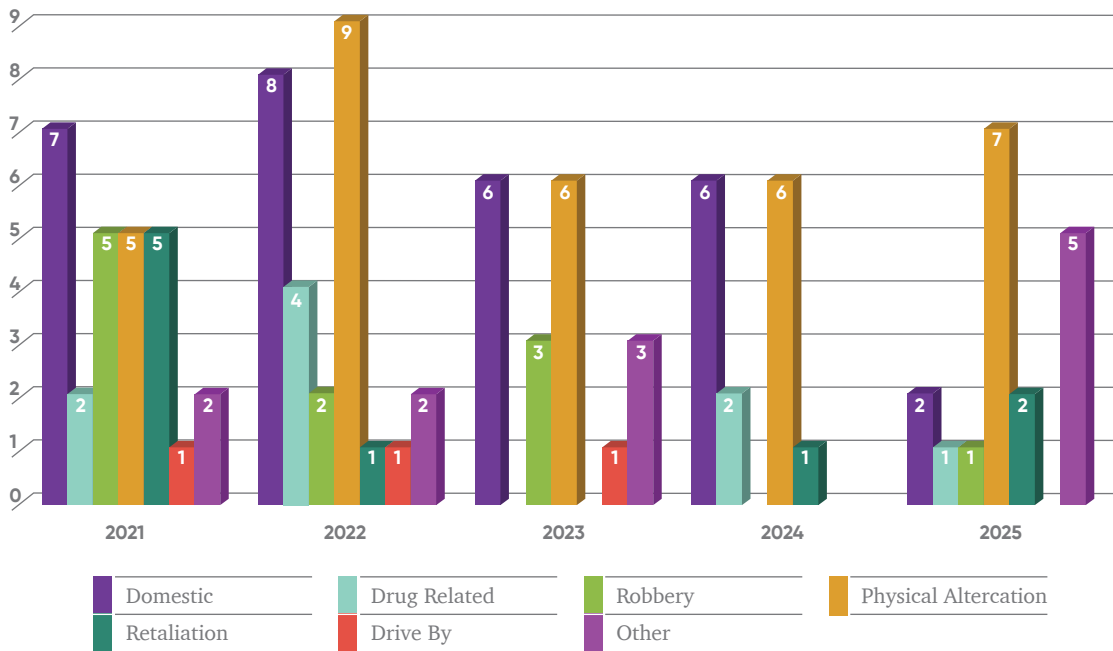
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE COALITION (DVC)

Sergeant Morrison of the DV Unit serves as the Chair of the Domestic Violence Coalition. The DV Unit is an active member of the Domestic Violence Coalition (DVC), which implements initiatives designed to eliminate domestic violence, enhance victim safety and increase offender accountability. Coalition members include law enforcement, prosecutors, victim advocates, probation, community service providers, legal aid, The Bridge and CPI.

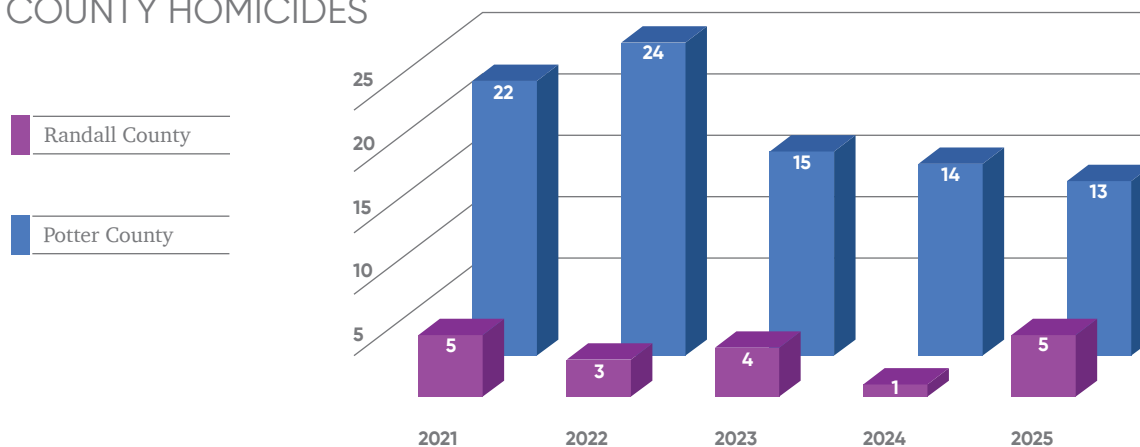
Notable DVC highlights include:

- Multi-agency video initiatives shared across social media platforms, with each agency explaining its role in the criminal justice process.
- An annual Domestic Violence Awareness Walk is held in downtown Amarillo. Each year, the event continues to grow, featuring guest speakers and food trucks, and drawing increased community participation.

5 YEAR HOMICIDE 2ND FACTOR



POTTER VS RANDALL COUNTY HOMICIDES



DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HIGH RISK TEAM (DVHRT)

The DV Unit also participates in the Domestic Violence High Risk Team (DVHRT) program. Patrol officers utilize the DALE (Danger Assessment for Law Enforcement) developed by Jeanne Geiger on all domestic violence calls. Officers conduct a lethality assessment in the field, and when a victim scores at a high-risk level, officers immediately contact an advocate to initiate victim services.

Sergeant Morrison maintains a comprehensive spreadsheet of high-risk suspects identified through these assessments. Selected cases are reviewed during multi-agency case review meetings held at Family Support Services. Participants include law enforcement, prosecutors, victim advocates, probation and community service providers, legal aid, The Bridge and CPI.

The purpose of the DVHRT is to identify high-risk suspects and victims, provide targeted services to high-risk victims, and implement strategies to hold high-risk offenders accountable.

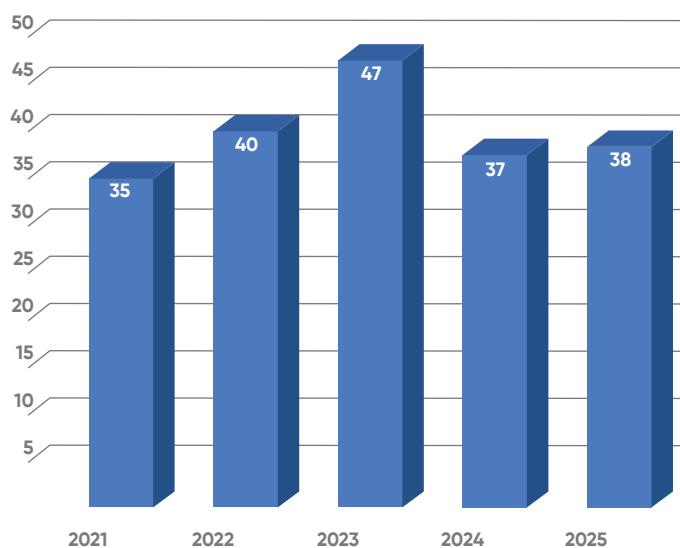
Victim Services Improvements

In 2024, Sergeant Morrison completed a full overhaul of the victims' rights pamphlets provided to domestic violence victims in the field. The updated pamphlets are fully compliant with state requirements and are used not only by the Police Department, but also by several local agencies to support their victims.

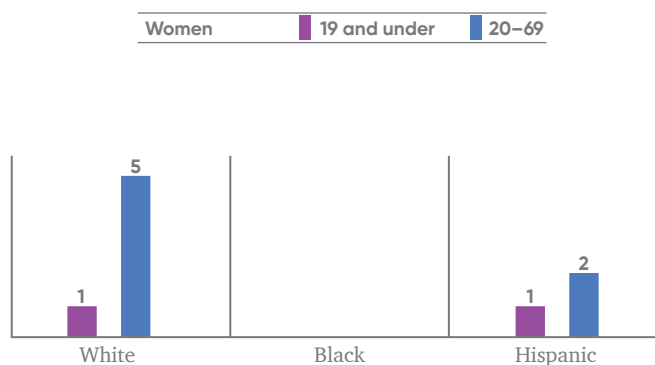
Training Goals

One ongoing goal of the DV Unit is to increase attendance at specialized training classes and schools. These training opportunities have proven to be highly beneficial in the past and are considered a valuable tool in improving the investigation and prosecution of domestic violence cases.

5 YEAR SUICIDES



2025 SUICIDE BY RACE AND AGE





GENERAL INVESTIGATIONS

The General Investigations squads conduct investigations of all crimes from minor misdemeanors to serious felonies to include sexual assaults and manslaughters. The School Liaison program engages with all students in Amarillo and Canyon Independent School Districts.

General Investigations is supervised by Lt. Warren Gross (not pictured).

GENERAL INVESTIGATIONS UNITS

JUVENILE SQUAD

TRAFFIC INVESTIGATIONS

SCHOOL LIAISON UNIT

JUVENILE SQUAD

The Juvenile Squad handles investigations involving juvenile offenders, covering both felonies and misdemeanors. Their cases range from serious crimes such as homicides to issues like runaways, and everything in between. Officers collaborate with Juvenile Probation and prosecutors in both counties to apprehend and process juvenile offenders. They also maintain close partnerships with the Bridge Children's Advocacy Center, Child Protective Services, and other social service agencies.



TRAFFIC INVESTIGATION SQUAD

The Traffic Squad is responsible for investigating fatal collisions, major accidents, hit-and-run cases, and other complex traffic incidents requiring in-depth analysis. In addition, they support CSI, Homicide, and other departmental units, and assist DPS and surrounding agencies with traffic-related investigations.

2025 TRAFFIC STATISTICS

Traffic Cases

- The Traffic unit investigated 2,390 cases.
- 683 DWI's
- 268 DWI's involved a crash
- 51 Major crash callouts

Traffic Crashes

- 5,924 Crashes
- 1,418 Hit and runs

Fatalities

- 25 fatalities in 24 crashes
- 23 fatalities involved at least one vehicle

- 9 call outs involved a motorcycle
- Speed was a factor in 5 motorcycle call outs
- 3 motorcycle crashes were fatalities. None of the motorcycle decedents were wearing a helmet.
- 12 Pedestrian related call outs
- Speed was a factor in 24 call outs
- Speed was a factor in 8 fatal crashes
- Alcohol was a factor in 13 call outs resulting in 7 deaths
- Narcotics was a factor in one fatal crash

Vehicular Homicides

- 3 Intoxication manslaughters resulting in 3 deaths and 5 serious injuries

Top Crash Contributing Factors

- Fail to control speed was a factor in 1,734 crashes
- Driver inattention was a factor in 724 crashes
- Changed lanes when unsafe was a factor in 506 crashes
- Failed to yield right of way was a factor in 460 crashes
- Backed without safety was a factor in 391 crashes



SCHOOL LIAISON UNIT

The School Liaison Unit plays a key role in community policing efforts within the department. Each officer is assigned to a specific school, where their primary responsibility is addressing and resolving issues on campus. Their duties range from ensuring physical security to assisting students and staff with personal and social challenges. While their mission is to protect students, they often serve as mentors and support figures for young people. They work closely with the Juvenile Squad and school district administrators.



The following activities were carried out by the **School Liaison program** in 2025:

- Presentations: **346**
- Complaints Investigated: **19,434**
- Incident Reports: **553**
- Felony arrests: **68**
- County arrests: **55**

These numbers represent both Middle and High School Squads and both AISD and CISD.



PROPERTY AND EVIDENCE UNIT

1. For 2025, the Amarillo Police Department has processed, reported and/or booked 27,690 pieces of property with an estimated value of \$57,204,553.00.
 - A. 1,489 drugs booked into property
 - B. 564 firearms booked into property
 - C. 802 items booked as safekeeping to be returned to owner
 - D. 884 item booked as found property
2. 100% inventory of property was completed and finished in approximately nine months.
3. Drug incinerator was purchased.
4. Worked with Axon to identify and verify the 4,000+ property locations in RMS to be imported into the Axon property module.
5. Completed the statute of limitations list for Axon providing the statutes for over 1,500 offenses to be imported into Axon.
6. Continued support for APD includes stationing an Evidence Technician in the booking room (8am–5pm), improving evidence handling accuracy, reducing later corrections, and drastically decreasing rejections and office call-backs.
7. Conducted a thorough relocation and reorganization of NIBIN and audited inventory totaling over 10,000 casings.
8. Successfully completed the 1,057 audit in record time—only 5 days.
9. Completed and passed two 100-item audits.
10. Completed and passed two 50-item audits.
11. Completed and passed the Big 4 audit (guns, money, drugs, and jewelry).
12. Successfully completed the 4-year state accreditation audit for the Texas Police Chiefs Association, with Property specifically noted as outstanding.

PROPERTY CRIMES

The **Property Crimes Unit** is supervised by Lt. Stan Rickwartz. The unit consists of the Burglary Squad, the Theft Squad, the Financial Crimes Squad, and the Civilian Investigator Squad. As the name suggests, the Property Crimes Unit investigates most offenses relating to theft and where some type of property is the focus. Even though the detectives are separated into squads with specific areas of responsibility, the squads often work together on lengthy investigations.

PROPERTY CRIMES UNITS

BURGLARY SQUAD

THEFT SQUAD

FINANCIAL CRIMES
SQUADCIVILIAN
INVESTIGATORS

BURGLARY SQUAD

The Burglary Squad investigates burglary of habitation, burglary of building, and criminal trespass cases. This squad also assists the Theft Squad in operations oriented toward theft reduction. The squad is supervised by a sergeant and has three detectives.

THEFT SQUAD

The Theft Squad investigates larceny theft, burglary of coin operated machines, criminal mischief (vandalism), burglary of motor vehicles, and stolen vehicles. The Theft Squad also investigates other offenses related to stolen vehicles and trailers relating to vehicle identification tampering and other fraudulent means of obscuring ownership of stolen vehicles. “Cloned” vehicles are on the rise and the Theft Squad have received training to investigate this new form of theft. The offenders will steal a vehicle then remove identifying data from its surfaces and in the vehicle’s computer system. The suspect would locate a similar vehicle online and “clone” that vehicle’s identity and sell the stolen vehicle on Facebook for a very good deal and cash or digital currency only. Organized retail theft is very prominent and seen in Amarillo. The Theft and Burglary Squads conducted months long investigation into an offender in Amarillo after this person was identified during a shoplifting operation. The investigation resulted in over \$100,000 in stolen property being recovered. The squad is supervised by a sergeant and has four detectives.

FINANCIAL CRIMES SQUAD

The Financial Crimes Squad investigates a myriad of money related crimes. These crimes include forgeries involving U.S. currency, business and personal checks, structured embezzlements that include employee theft over an extended period, scam/confidence games, identity theft, and frauds. Crimes of this type are often perpetrated after the identity of the victim is compromised and furthered using the internet.

Cybercrime is the “new” economic offense that this squad investigates. The overall object of these crimes is to steal the victim’s assets. The money “trail” is often difficult to follow as the programs have yearly subscriptions fees that are expensive. However, without these programs, financial

cybercrimes often go unsolved. If detectives can freeze illicit digit accounts, the suspect is often a foreign national operating in a foreign country. The squad wrote and executed the area’s first two digital currency warrants and were able to recover a portion of one’s losses and all of another. The squad is supervised by a sergeant and has three detectives and one civilian investigator.

CIVILIAN INVESTIGATOR UNIT

These investigators follow up on misdemeanor cases in which there are no leads or suspects identified in the original report. However, there are many cases in which the Civilian Investigators develop suspects, and the case will either be reassigned to a detective, or the Civilian Investigators will file the cases themselves, typically in Municipal Court. These investigators are a valued squad that allow detectives, sworn officers, to investigate reports with named suspects. The squad is supervised by a sergeant and has three investigators.

Three of the four Property Crimes Unit’s squads experienced a **decline in assigned cases for the 2025 year**. In 2024, the Property Crimes Unit had 14,404 cases and in 2025, there were 13,192 cases, an **overall decrease of 8.41%**.

- Burglary had 1,168 cases in 2025 compared to 1,419 cases in 2024, a **17.69% decrease**
- Theft had 1,888 cases in 2025 compared to 2,685 in 2024, a **29.68% decrease**
- Financial Crimes had 1,662 cases in 2025 compared to 1,910 in 2024, a **12.98% decrease**
- Civilian Investigators had 8,474 cases in 2025 compared to 8,390 in 2024, a **1% increase**

A specific category of theft that interests the public is auto theft and this stat is included in the overall statistics of theft cases. There were 493 cases of auto theft in 2025 compared to 570 in 2024, a **13.51% decrease**.

TRAINING AND PERSONNEL





TRAINING AND PERSONNEL

UNITS

POLICE ACADEMY	SHOOTING COMPLEX	RECRUITING	BACKGROUND INVESTIGATION
TRAINING COORDINATOR	TEXAS POLICE CHIEF'S ASSOCIATION FOUNDATION (TPCA)		BEST PRACTICES ACCREDITATION
CITIZENS POLICE ACADEMY		PERSONNEL SERVICES	

The Training and Personnel Division, supervised by Capt. Louis Sanchez, oversees a wide range of functions that support the department's personnel and professional development. The division manages Personnel Services, coordinates In-Service Training and Recruitment efforts, and oversees operations at the Amarillo Police Academy and the Amarillo Shooting Complex. In addition, the division is responsible for maintaining compliance with Texas Police Chief's Association accreditation standards and coordinating the department's bi-annual Citizen's Police Academy program.

AMARILLO POLICE DEPARTMENT QUARTERMASTER

The Quartermaster plays a vital role in ensuring the department remains fully equipped to carry out its mission. By overseeing the procurement, management, and distribution of essential supplies and equipment, the Quartermaster ensures personnel have the resources they need

to perform their duties effectively. With a strong commitment to efficiency and fiscal responsibility, the Quartermaster also serves as the department's primary purchasing agent and works closely with the City of Amarillo Purchasing Department to coordinate acquisitions and maintain responsible stewardship of public resources.

AMARILLO POLICE DEPARTMENT WELLNESS PROGRAM

The Amarillo Police Department **Wellness Program**, coordinated by Officer Keith Cargo, is designed to support the overall well-being of employees and their families. The program provides confidential resources in four core areas: physical, psychological, financial, and spiritual wellness. It promotes fitness, stress management, peer support, financial education, and spiritual care, and continues to grow with ongoing employee input to better support officers and civilian staff, both on and off duty.

The program also offers advanced training for the Peer Support Team, ensuring they are knowledgeable about available resources. This includes Sherrie Dowty-Montana's Lone Star Readiness Program, which connects officers with vetted active and retired peer supporters and licensed counselors who offer free, confidential counseling funded by the State of Texas. The Peer Support Team can also guide employees to additional resources such as the City of Amarillo Employee Assistance Program (EAP), the APO counseling program, and others.

Physical wellness focuses on fitness, exercise, and healthy eating. Staying physically fit helps officers manage stress and reduces the risk of injury on the job.

Psychological wellness addresses stress, mental health, and coping with the demands of police work. The program offers training, stress management resources, and Critical Incident Stress Debriefings through the Peer Support Team. These services are available to officers and their families.

The **Peer Support Team** helps connect officers with confidential resources, including peer support, counseling services, the City of Amarillo Employee Assistance Program, and other support programs.

A key component of psychological wellness is **Critical Incident Stress Debriefing (CISD)**. The Peer Support Team is trained in CISD techniques and continues to provide debriefings following incidents that may contribute to post-traumatic stress among involved officers.

Financial wellness helps reduce stress at home and supports long-term financial stability. Classes on basic money management and retirement planning are offered to employees and their families.

Spiritual wellness is the foundation of the program and is led by Lt. Shane Chadwick, with support from vetted ministers.

All services are confidential and designed to support officers both on and off duty.

MENTAL HEALTH

SELF-CARE & CHECK-IN

"Your role matters and so does your wellbeing"

Working in law enforcement – sworn or civilian – can be stressful and emotionally demanding. Exposure to critical incidents, difficult situations and daily office work – whether routine or deadline – can over time add up. Feeling stressed, worn down or affected by the work becomes the "new norm".

Taking care of mental health matters because healthy staff do better work and stay on the job longer. Simple self-care practices and regular check-ins help catch issues early, reduce burnout and remind people they are not alone in dealing with challenges of work. Listed below are practical ways to support well-being and make mental health a routine part of how we can look out for one another.

SELF-CARE

- Take a 5-minute break away from the desk
- Go outside

STRESS SIGNALS TO LOOK FOR

- Irritability
- Trouble concentrating
- Headaches/stomach issues
- Muscle tension
- Poor sleep, exhaustion even after rest
- Withdrawal from co-workers

RESETTING THE NERVOUS SYSTEM

- **Box Breathing:** 4 seconds in – hold 4 – out 4 – hold 4 (2-3 rounds)
- **5-4-3-2-1 Scan:** Name 5 things you see, 4 feel, 3 hear, 2 smell, 1 taste
- **Muscle Reset:** Clench shoulders/jaw/hands for 5 seconds – release

GROUP OR TEAM CHECK-INS

- Schedule weekly/monthly check-ins with your team
- Be aware of your employees' overall well-being or temperament
- Keep it voluntary and respectful – no forced sharing
- Make it a routine focused on support, not productivity

INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

- Make sure to do brief check-ins daily with your coworkers

The most important thing to remember is sometimes an individual just needs someone to *LISTEN*.

REASONS I BECAME A POLICE OFFICER

LT. KEVIN KORINEK

I became an officer because I believe in serving something greater than myself and contributing to a mission built on trust, responsibility, and commitment. I was driven by a desire to lead with integrity and continue growing both personally and professionally. Over the years, my reasons for becoming an officer and for remaining one have evolved as I have gained experience and perspective; however, my overall “why” has remained consistent. The role continues to challenge me to make thoughtful decisions, take accountability, and set a positive example while supporting those around me. Most importantly, it allows me to help guide direction, strengthen our team, and make a meaningful and lasting impact on the people and communities we serve.

SGT. OSCAR GARCIA

I had an older brother and a cousin both whom I really looked up too and admired who were both police officers. I started college as a business major and after a few semesters found that it was not my calling. I felt connected and drawn to law enforcement, helping people and keeping the community safe. I would hear the stories my brother and cousin would talk about their job which all seemed so amazing to me. I decided to become a criminal justice major, applied at several agencies and Amarillo Police called first. I have worked with wonderful people, and it has been an amazing, rewarding career.

SGT. A MERRYMAN

In the late 1970's I was in the downtown area with my parents. I would have been maybe 7 or 8 years old at the time. I saw two police officers that were dressed in the old light blue uniforms the department had back then. The two officers were riding police motorcycles. I loved riding motorcycles and thought that was the coolest thing ever. At about the same time CHIPS was a TV show that was broadcast about California Highway Patrolmen on motorcycles. Being my young age, I thought that was the coolest thing ever. When I grew up I could not shake the fact I wanted to be a policeman that rode a motorcycle. I became a motorcycle officer in 2002 and quickly realized that CHIPS saw more action in a one-hour TV show than I saw in a 10-year career as a motorcycle officer. With that said, I have never regretted becoming a police officer as I could not have chosen a better career for myself.

ASSISTANT CHIEF JIMMY JOHNSON

From the time I was young, I never wanted to be anything other than a police officer with the Amarillo Police Department. For me, this profession was never just a career choice, it was a calling placed on my heart. I have always felt a deep sense of responsibility to serve others, and law enforcement gave me the opportunity to live out that servant's heart every single day. To wear the shield in Amarillo has been one of the greatest blessings of my life. This community's unwavering support, trust, and encouragement have sustained me through the challenges and strengthened my commitment to protect and serve with integrity, compassion, and honor. I am grateful that my calling and my community came together in the place I have always been proud to call home.

CPL. MATTHEW BRUSH

To answer the question simply, I became a police officer because it's what my dad did. It's also what my grandfather did, it's what my grandfather's dad did and it's what my grandfather's grandfather did. I had the opportunity to become the 5th generation member of the Brush family to become a police officer, and it meant a lot to me to fulfill that role. I would like to also answer the question of why I remain a police officer to this day. To remain a police officer I believe is a calling, a calling to serve and protect my friends and my neighbors who make up this city that I love. It is a calling to protect the city that my children call home, the same way my father protected it for me and all other children alike. It is a calling to protect the innocent from harm, whatever that may look like. I remain a police officer to answer a calling I feel on my life every single day, the same calling four generations answered before me.

SGT. BRENT HARLAN

The reason I became a police officer is somewhat difficult to describe. I wanted to “make a difference and help people”, but I think those words are used too often. I always wanted to be an officer and met some officers when I was young that influenced my career path. I thought I was well versed in the ways of the world when I started, but I quickly realized I had led a pretty sheltered life. I had never seen how people treat actually family, friends, or strangers. I don't believe being a police officer is a job, but a calling or way of life. You never look at things the same way. Family is hugely important in our profession, and the bonds that are made with others get you through the difficult times. With time, my objective changed to help those willing to accept it and protect those who cannot protect themselves. We have an obligation to our community, other officers, and ourselves to “make a difference”.

Amarillo
Police
Department
is

NOW RECRUITING



2025 SALARY

- \$70,046 starting recruit salary
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- \$77,961 salary after 24 months
- \$81,859 salary after 36 months
- Lateral Entry Program
 - \$74,249-\$90,250

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POLICE EXPLORING PROGRAM

Officers and professional staff within the Amarillo Police Department lead the Amarillo Police Exploring Post.

Exploring is a career education program for young men and women 14 through 20 years old, focusing on leadership and public service in law enforcement. The post is a tax-exempt organization under section 501 (c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code. A team of dedicated volunteer employees works together to organize events, host learning experiences for the youth, and participate in community service

opportunities throughout the year. The post raises funds to facilitate out-of-town trips for the Explorers. The post is a continuous program where members can progressively learn and become leaders and mentors to newer members. The objective is to develop future police officers and give young people the inspiration and guidance they need to come to work in the law enforcement profession.



RECORDS

RECORDS



The Records Division is responsible for providing essential support to the everyday operation of the Police Department, as well as providing a variety of services to the public.

UNITS

FRONT COUNTER

DATA ENTRY

OPEN RECORDS

VALIDATION

The Records Division employs 23 full-time and two part-time civilian staff. The division serves as the official repository for all departmental criminal records and documents. Responsibilities include data entry; maintaining police reports, arrest records, online and phone reports; tracking crime statistics; and serving as the point of contact for requests under the Texas Public Information Act.



EMPLOYEE HIGHLIGHTS

AMARILLO SOUTH ROTARY

POLICE OFFICERS OF 2025



OFFICER MICAH HEAGEN
Officer of the Year, 2025



SGT. GORDON EATLEY
Officer of the First Quarter



CPL. MIKE WILLIAMS
Officer of the Second Quarter



OFFICER MICAH HEAGEN
Officer of the Third Quarter



OFFICER ASHER DAY
Officer of the Fourth Quarter



DERENDA RUSH
Civilian Employee of the Year

PERSONNEL PROMOTIONS/RETIREES

SWORN PROMOTIONS

Name	Promoted from	Promoted to	Promotion Date
Joseph Loftus	Captain	Assistant Chief	09/04/2025
Michael “Clay” Rolan	Lieutenant	Captain	09/04/2025
Caleb Sanderson	Sergeant	Lieutenant	09/04/2025
Marcus Bettag	Corporal	Sergeant	08/21/2025
Vincent Bissoni	Corporal	Sergeant	12/11/2025
Johnny Hoggatt	Corporal	Sergeant	12/11/2025
Bryan Hughes	Corporal	Sergeant	05/08/2025
Daniel Smith	Corporal	Sergeant	09/04/2025
James “Cody” Adams	Officer	Corporal	05/08/2025
Zachary Cremers	Officer	Corporal	09/04/2025
Jacob Daughett	Officer	Corporal	08/21/2025
Steven Deal	Officer	Corporal	12/11/2025
Jarrid Gray	Officer	Corporal	12/11/2025
Micah Heagen	Officer	Corporal	05/08/2025
Cesar Huerta	Officer	Corporal	05/08/2025
David West	Officer	Corporal	11/06/2025

CIVILIAN PROMOTIONS

Name	Promoted to	Promotion Date
Sandra Blankinship	AA-III CID Homicide	08/21/2025
James Graham	Property Mgr.	01/25/2025
Brayleigh Leach	CST/CID	08/21/2025
Tresa Munoz	CST/CID	03/03/2025
Faith Shelton	AA-III Records – Open Records	07/24/2025

RETIRED

Name	Years of Service
Richard “Kevin” Anderson	35
Martin Birkenfield	34
Ken Funtek	32
Michael Hancock	30
David James	35
Vinilla King	19
Scott Lawrence	20
Rosemary Robinson	52
Tommy Russell	35

AWARDS & CITATIONS

LONGEVITY AWARD 20 YEARS

Sgt. Victor Del Fierro	Cpl. Johnny Bermea	Cpt. Jeff Roden
Cpl. David Young	Ofc. Faustino Martinez	

LONGEVITY AWARD 25 YEARS

Lt. Thomas Hightower	Sgt. Wes Hill	Sgt. Robin James
Sgt. Chuck Jewett	Sgt. Wes Lang	Sgt. Mike Mogelinski
Sgt. Justin Young	Cpl. Paul Ware	

LONGEVITY AWARD 30 YEARS

Lt. Fred Harmon Jr.	Lt. John Call	Cpl. Ed Carroll
Cpl. Gary Hamilton		

OPERATION CITATION

Sgt. Adrian Hernandez (2)	Sgt. Richard Anderson	Cpl. Tony Kennedy
Cpl. Chris Cruz	Cpl. Jonathan Kinnison	Ofc. Doug Richardson
Ofc. Ricky Matthews	Ofc. Randy Mincher	Ofc. Chance Harlan
Ofc. Eric Quirk	Ofc. Jacob Daughett (2)	Ofc. Micah Heagen
Haley Hernandez (2)	Wendy Green	Luis Hernandez (2)

MERITORIOUS SERVICE CITATION

Sgt. Logan Grazier

LIFE SAVING AWARD

Sgt. Michael Stephenson	Cpl. Matthew Wingate	Ofc. Tysen Auldrige
Ofc. Andrew Cole	Ofc. Bradley Hudson	Ofc. Lauren Nelson
Ofc. Albert Plexico	Ofc. Michael Ritter	Ofc. Sean Trotter
Ofc. Alexis Gonzales	Ofc. Tyler Webster	Ofc. Demarcus Harman
Ofc. Sammy Garcia	Ofc. Susan Lewis	Ofc. Sarah Dimas

CITIZEN CITATION OF SERVICE

Floyd Fain	Keiffer McBeth	Jennifer White
Kelli Charles	Alex Martinez	Nicole Martinez

HONORABLE MENTIONS

SGT. LOGAN GRAZIER

MERITORIOUS SERVICE

On January 26, 2025, Officers responded to Downtown Amarillo for service where an armed gunman shoot multiple victims outside a nightclub. We have just acknowledged the seven (7) Officers who helped to save multiple victims' lives.

In addition to those Officers, Sgt. Logan Grazier was on duty that night and responded to the shooting where he Immediately observed multiple victims with gunshot wounds. Sgt. Grazier quickly took the lead and set up a Casualty Collection Point and began to triage the victims. Sgt. Grazier coordinated the response of other supervisors, detectives and crime scene Investigators to three (3) separate scenes, which Included the nightclub shooting location, the street where the traffic stop of the suspects by Randall County Deputies, and the local hospitals.

Sgt. Grazier's actions directly contributed to the successful outcome of this Incident by providing direction and facilitating communication between supervisors, detectives and crime scene Investigators, bystanders and witnesses.

His unwavering composure, professionalism, and leadership reflect credit upon him and are In keeping with the highest standards of the Amarillo Police Department and the City of Amarillo. Sgt. Grazier is hereby awarded the Meritorious Service Citation.

On January 26, 2025, at 2am, a 911 call came in reporting a mass shooting in Downtown Amarillo. An unknown gunman had just opened fire into a large crowd of innocent bystanders as they were exiting a downtown nightclub. In all, there were eight (8) people wounded, one (1) fatally. Officers quickly arrived on scene and began providing lifesaving first aid measures to multiple victims. These seven (7) officers applied a total of two (2) chest seals and nine (9) tourniquets, saving multiple victims' lives and limiting loss of life and limbs.

For your quick actions, utilizing your training and knowing what to do in a very stressful situation, saved multiple Citizens of Amarillo. Thank you all! You are true heroes! You are hereby awarded the Amarillo Police Department Life Saving Award.

LIFE SAVING AWARD:

OFC. TYSEN AULDRIDGE
OFC. ANDREW COLE
OFC. BRADLEY HUDSON
OFC. LAUREN NELSON
OFC. ALBERT PLEXICO
OFC. MICHAEL RITTER
OFC. SEAN TROTTER

K-9

Last week the APO K-9 unit competed in the Lubbock Area Police K-9 Narcotic Detection/Fugitive Apprehension Training. Officers competing were Sgt Lavery and K-9 Sam, Cpl. West and K-9 Sniper, and Ofc. Skaggs and K-9 Shara. They competed in different categories against 30 other law enforcement K-9s and handlers from the area. Our unit showed very well with Sgt. Lavery and K-9 Sam winning 1st place in Narcotics Detection and 2nd place in the Patrol K-9 category. Congratulations to Sgt. Lavery and K-9 Sam.

LT. DAVID HAGLER



CASE CLOSED

On February 3, 2024, 911 dispatcher Emilio Jimenez received a call from Juan Salinas, who reported that he had accidentally shot his girlfriend, Cecilia "Ceci" Rodriguez.

Officers responded to the residence, where Officer Reyes, Sgt. Grazier, Sgt. Cantwell, and Officer Hall found Juan standing in the front yard holding the couple's 5-week-old daughter. Officer Reyes cared for the infant for several hours until child protective services arrived.

Inside the home, Sgt. Cantwell, Sgt. Grazier, and Officer Hall discovered Cecilia deceased from an apparent gunshot wound. In the same room, they noticed a pair of eyes peeking over the covers of a toddler bed. Beneath the covers, they found the couple's young son hiding next to his deceased mother. Sgt. Cantwell stayed with the child until care providers arrived.

Juan was interviewed and ultimately confessed to murdering Cecilia, the mother of his children.

CONTINUED ON NEXT PAGE

On August 4, 2025, the Randall County District Attorney's Office-First Assistant DA Lacy Miller, Assistant DA Jil Wieck-Trout, Assistant DA Andrew Baker, and Investigator Higley-began trial in the 181 st District Court, with the Honorable Judge Frausto presiding. The prosecution team worked tirelessly from sunrise to sunset to develop and present a compelling case to the jury.

Critical evidence, including video and phone data extractions conducted by Officer Rutherford and Forensic Technician Lorraine Matthyse, revealed the traumatic and abusive nature of Juan and Cecilia's relationship.

The crime scene investigation conducted by Officer Dorris and Sgt. Lang was exceptionally thorough, allowing the jury to clearly understand the events and physical evidence of the case.

On Thursday, August 7, after hearing closing arguments from Lacy Miller and Jil Wieck-Trout and reviewing the evidence, the jury left the courtroom visibly emotional. Deliberations lasted less than 30 minutes before they returned a guilty verdict for Murder.

On Friday, August 8, Miller, Wieck-Trout, and Baker presented a strong sentencing argument for life imprisonment. Once again, the jury deliberated for less than 30 minutes before sentencing Juan to life in prison.

The successful outcome of this case was made possible through the dedication and professionalism of:

- Ofc. Hall
- Ofc. Reyes
- Sgt. Cantwell
- Sgt. Grazier
- Ofc. Rutherford
- Forensic Technician Lorraine Matthyse
- Sgt. Lang
- Ofc. S. Dorris
- Sgt. Harlan
- Retired Sgt. & Investigator Higley
- First Assistant DA Lacy Miller
- Assistant DA Jil Wieck-Trout
- Assistant DA Andrew Baker
- AECC Dispatcher Emilio Jimenez
- Ofc. Bowman
- Ofc. Plexico
- Ofc. Brookshire
- Lt. Clements
- Cpl. Carrol

Apologies if anyone was unintentionally omitted. Many of you demonstrate this same level of commitment every day, and the community deeply appreciates your service.

SGT. ADRIAN M HERNANDEZ

RECOGNIZING OUR CRIME SCENE UNIT

This year to date they have responded to 107 call-outs working a total of 784.85 combined man hours, with an additional 30 hours of follow-up work on those cases. 39 homicide/suspicious death related calls, 27 VCU/DV related calls, 22 traffic related calls, and 19 others.

In addition to calls, they have taught two week-long Intermediate Crime Scene Schools, the Lisa Cherry Summer Camp, Explorer's, Student Academy, Citizen's Academy, the Amarillo Police Academy, along with various other presentations for organizations, with more teaching and presenting coming soon. Half of the team have attended multiple week long schools throughout the year including Fingerprint Comparison (Basic, Intermediate, and Advanced), Bloodstain Analysis, and Forensic Photography.

Each of these men and women take pride and ownership in the work they put in to every case, working along side our detectives to present the strongest case possible. They sacrifice a great deal of their personal time, often in the dead of night, along side others seeking justice for our citizens.

SGT. WES LANG



FBINAA
FBI National Academy Associates, Inc.

SESSION 294 GRADUATION

QAUNTICO, VA | JUNE 5, 2025

Two hundred and thirty-nine law enforcement officers graduated today from the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia. The 294th session of the National Academy consisted of men and women from 48 states and the District of Columbia. The class included member of law enforcement agencies from 14 countries, six military organizations, and our federal civilian organizations.

Internationally known for its academic excellence, the National Academy offers 10 weeks of advanced communication, leadership, and fitness training. Participants must have proven records as professionals within their agencies to attend. On average, these officers have 21 years of law enforcement experience and usually return to their agencies to serve in executive-level positions.

A total of 56,180 graduates have completed the FBI National Academy since it began in 1935. The National Academy is held at the FBI Training Academy in Quantico, the same facility where the FBI trains its new special agents and intelligence analysts.

FBI NATIONAL ACADEMY GRADUATE



CONGRATULATIONS
LT. KEVIN KORINEK

COVERT/TACTICAL UNITS LIEUTENANT
AMARILLO POLICE DEPARTMENT

294TH SESSION | 2025



Amarillo Fire Department LETTER OF COMMENDATION

January 30, 2025

The purpose of this letter is to give a formal commendation to the members of the Amarillo Police Department who responded to the mass casualty event on January 26, 2025.

I am writing to offer my highest recommendation of commendation for the extraordinary efforts demonstrated by the Amarillo Police Department (APD) during the mass casualty incident that occurred on January 26th, 2025. As a member of the Amarillo Fire Department (AFD) and the incident commander for this incident, I witnessed firsthand the exceptional professionalism, skill, and teamwork exhibited by the APD officers at the scene.

At approximately 2:05 AM on January 26th, Engine 1 and Ladder 1 were dispatched to a reported medical assault call at the Bodegas nightclub. Upon arrival, our team was immediately made aware that multiple victims had suffered gunshot wounds. Thanks to the quick and decisive actions of the APD officers, each victim had already received critical first aid interventions, including properly applied tourniquets on the extremities and chest seals where necessary. This immediate response significantly improved the chances of survival for these victims.

Our crew had heard that a single officer applied a total of eight tourniquets alone. This quick, lifesaving action by the APD was critical in minimizing further blood loss and stabilizing the victims for transport. Their preparedness and skill in the application of these devices directly facilitated our team's medical care and triage of the victims.

As first responders to this chaotic event, not only myself, but all AFD members on scene were extremely impressed by the actions of the APD officers. We believe their actions made a significant difference in the outcomes of this tragic event. The smooth coordination and expertise displayed by those APD officers made our emergency medical response both more efficient and effective.

AMARILLO POLICE DEPARTMENT INNOVATES WITH DRONE TECHNOLOGY TO AID SEARCHES IN THE HILL COUNTRY FLOODS

'Guys, nobody's ever done this, we're just willing to give it a shot and give you a place to look'

BY JULIE THOMPSON | JULY 17, 2025

Cmdr. Shane Chadwick and other area officers had planned to head south to assist with a cold case even before the floods hit Hill Country. In the ongoing search efforts, they had an idea to use the drones' thermal imaging to map for heat signatures, narrowing down the search area.

Just after 10:30 p.m. on Sunday, The Amarillo Tribune received a text from Cmdr. Shane Chadwick, a driving force behind the Amarillo Regional Crime Center (ARCC). He and two others, Cpl. Sy Slover, currently assigned as a Task Force Officer to the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms (ATF), and Officer Chris Holcomb, currently attached to SWAT full time at the Amarillo Police Department, were headed to Austin with their drones.

Fire Chief Michael Phillips, of the Marble Falls Area Volunteer Fire Department, had been swept away in his vehicle as he attempted to cross Cow Creek while responding to a distress call from the flooding on July 5, according to local reporting in Burnet County. Of the six to go missing in Burnet County, he was the only one yet to be found.

On Tuesday, the Marble Falls Area Volunteer Fire Department announced Phillips' death, the end of his watch, on social media. "He was more than just a friend, mentor, and leader -he was our family. His absence will



Large rocks were deposited near areas that saw flooding. Photo courtesy of Shane Chadwick.

leave a void in our hearts and our department that cannot be filled. We will honor his legacy and the extraordinary service he gave to our community by continuing to be the first responders he strived for us to be," the post reads.

"I've never seen anything like it in 30 years of law enforcement," Chadwick said. "The force of that water is insane. What it did, what it did to trees, it moved rocks the size of cars and flipped them over. Honestly, [Phillips] didn't have a chance. He just happened to be at the wrong place at the wrong time when that swell of that flood water came down and literally caught him off guard."

Chadwick said the water would have gotten a sheriff's deputy who had been with Phillips, too, but he happened to be about 15 feet back from the swell that took Phillips.

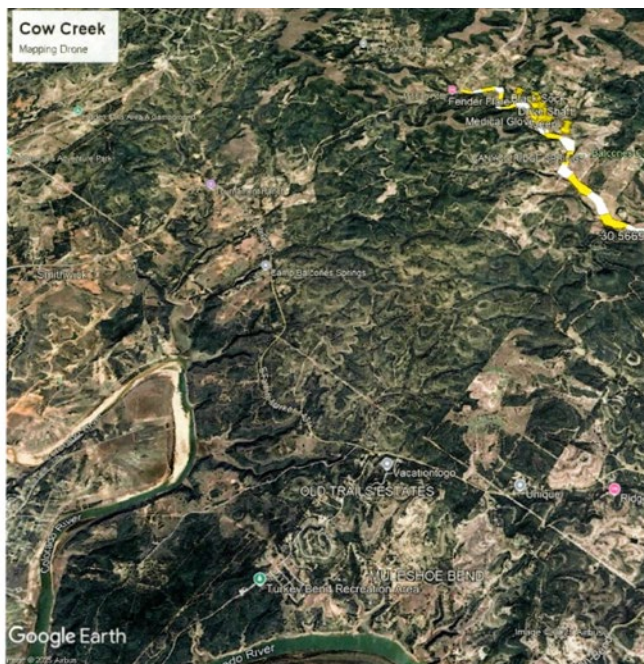
"He watched him go," Chadwick said. "That's what I'm saying, that's how fast that happened. No way to have seen it coming."

But Chadwick didn't know, if the way they intended to use their drone technology to find the missing fire chief was even possible. They were going to attempt to use thermal imaging to sweep the area, because as a body decomposes, it creates heat. Chadwick said even if it's underground, so long as it's not buried too deep, the drones can pick up the heat signature it produces.

"It's never been done in the world that we're aware of. We didn't even know if it would be possible," Chadwick said. "But we reached out to Gene Robinson from Austin Community College. He says, 'I don't know, it's a long shot, but we can try it.' So that's how we ended up mapping Cow Creek looking for him."

Robinson teaches drone curricula at Austin Community College's Public Safety Training Center. Chadwick said he'd done research on locating bodies through heat signatures at the Forensic Anthropology Research Facility at Texas State University in San Marcos. Primarily, he'd been focused on being able to find graves, which was how they'd planned to look for the cold case homicide victim. The drones can detect where the earth has been disturbed.

Chadwick said they're constantly testing different ideas. They test with cadaver dogs and various other technologies, but working with drones and cameras is fairly new.



A map of areas where drone surveillance detected a heat signature. Photo courtesy of Cmdr. Shane Chadwick.

"I came down here to meet Gene because I wanted to understand that side of the technology," Chadwick said. "He's the one that has the software that we send the photos to, and he circles things on a map and tells us 'this is where you need to look' and, so far with us, he has been accurate the three times that we've tried it. But this is different. Nobody's found anybody using thermal or looking for heat."

So, when Chadwick and his crew went in, they gave the public safety people they met no expectations. They told them, "Guys, nobody's ever done this, we're just willing to give it a shot and give you a place to look." Chadwick said the community had been holding vigils for Phillips every night and praying someone would find him.

Chadwick met with Chief Alan Trevion of Burnet County, who told him they didn't have a real way to look other than going down to the creek and searching. Chadwick said it was already a large effort, with agencies from Illinois, Florida and other states.

To map the area, Chadwick said they turned on the thermal cameras and pointed straight down at 90 degrees. Every time it takes a picture, it's adding GPS coordinates while looking for heat signatures. The program then takes all of those pictures and makes a base, which Chadwick said is called an "orthomosaic" - basically a giant picture of the mapped area.

Chadwick said this is technology that almost all of the departments have on the drones; they're just using them in a different way. They mapped nine miles of the creek and ended up with 12 heat signatures that popped up. Ten of those were rocks that had retained the heat of the day.

For the crews on the ground that had already been searching for days, Chadwick said it was a relief just to have somewhere to search. In normal search and rescue operations, the approach is simply to spread out and comb through the debris one step at a time. The heat signatures spotted by the drones gave them areas to focus on.

And two of the other heat signatures were promising for this new way to use the drone's technology. On Wednesday, we waited to hear news from Chadwick as they investigated another spot, hoping the drones had finally found Phillips.

Unfortunately, the heat signatures did not come from Phillips. One was a sheep that had been buried under about 18 inches of debris. The other, a deer. However, those discoveries suggested that using drones this way was potentially effective. They could, in fact, find decomposing bodies in the rubble.

"Even though we didn't find the chief, we did find that there is a technology that most departments currently have in their possession, that if they coordinate their mapping with their teams, they can map a large area rather quickly and potentially can find people," Chadwick said. "We'll have to be Johnny-On-The-Spot in an emergency like that. Is it possible to find them as soon as the skies are clear enough for us to go?"

Ultimately, as long as a person is warm enough to see, whether because they're still alive or decomposing, Chadwick believes it's possible this could change the game for search and rescue operations. He wants to spread the message of their technological discoveries on this trip to other law enforcement agencies with drones. That's why he called The Amarillo Tribune.

"What I'm saying is, you start sending people out to go look. That's it," Chadwick said. "It's hard to find somebody, especially if you've got a big area that's affected. But you could, if you had a group of guys with a drone, you could premap that and say, 'Look, send them out.' As long as they're warm enough for you to see them, you can start sending people to those locations, because it's very precise. Maybe, even, you can find someone that's alive. That's hard. But on the flip side, and I guess the sadder side of it is, we can also try to recover bodies for burial and try to give these folks closure."

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