

Jefferson County Sheriff's Report

Fiscal Year 2015-2016



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The 2015-2016 Jefferson County Sheriff's Report

Peter H. Dougherty, Sheriff

Jefferson County is the easternmost county of West Virginia, at the confluence of the Potomac and Shenandoah Rivers, and is part of Washington/Baltimore Metropolitan Statistical Area.¹ The U.S. Census Bureau estimated Jefferson County's 2015 population to be 56,482. Jefferson is the 11th most populous of the state's 55 counties. The largest city in Jefferson County is Charles Town, the county seat, with an estimated population of 5,259. There are four other incorporated communities, Ranson, Bolivar, Harpers Ferry and Shepherdstown. There are 83 identified unincorporated communities. An estimated 79% of Jefferson County residents reside outside of municipal corporations or where there is no municipal law enforcement and thereby are primarily served by the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office. The County Population is 88.3% white; 6.8% black; 5.6% Hispanic; 1.9% Asian and 3% other. Jefferson County is 212 sq. miles with approximately 895 miles of roads. There were 20,409 calls for service dispatched through Jefferson County's Emergency Communications Center 79.9% were taken by the Sheriff's Office.



Brief Summary of Activity:

Increase:

A 42% increase in calls for law enforcement service over past two years
Animal cruelty complaints, animal welfare checks, aggressive behavior, wildlife investigations and animal bite complaints cases
Concealed weapons permits
Felony and misdemeanor arrest
Personal Protection Orders
Impaired driver arrests
Traffic violations
Court Ordered Mental Hygiene transports
Tax bills processed and collections
Changed hours to 8 AM to 6 PM at the Sheriff's Law Enforcement Office

¹ The map and overview is designed to give readers a sense of the geographic proximity of our county to the State. Jefferson County is the easternmost county and in close proximity to Baltimore, MD and Washington DC.

Decrease:

Writs and serve of process
Mental hygiene detentions and hearings

Duties of the Sheriff of Jefferson County:

- Serve as the Chief Law Enforcement Officer in the county
- Serve and execute all returns, notices and processes issued by the courts
- Enforce court orders
- Provide Court Security Officers to court proceedings and security in County Courthouse Buildings/ grounds
- Transport prisoners and accused facing extraditions
- Detain and when appropriate transport those adjudicated under mental hygiene petitions
- Provide fiduciary services to individuals who are unable to do so for themselves
- Review applications and issue licenses for concealed carry permits
- Collect all state, county, municipal and school taxes; disburse money to appropriate agencies
- Maintain all tax records
- Enforce payment of delinquent taxes
- Administer Animal Control Office to enforce animal cruelty statutes and ordinances

Tax Office:

The Sheriff's Tax Office is located on East Washington Street, Charles Town. The office is open for the public Monday-Friday 9:00 AM to 5:00 PM.

During Fiscal year 2015-16 the Tax Office prepared 51,818 tax bills and supplement bills an increase of 739 bills and collected \$52,601,279.64, a countywide total increase of \$1,304,123 [or 2.5% increase] from the previous year.

Jefferson County Commission:	\$12,258,198
Jefferson County Board of Education:	\$37,848,008
Ranson:	\$ 1,015,993
Charles Town	\$ 967,006
State of West Virginia:	\$ 212,860
Shepherdstown:	\$ 161,852
Bolivar:	\$ 94,836
Harpers Ferry:	\$ 57,446

During the last fiscal year the Jefferson County Commission received approximately 23% of all funds collected last year; the Board of Education 72%; Ranson and Charles Town less than 2% and Shepherdstown, Bolivar and Harpers Ferry received less than one percent.

Hotel/Motel Taxes:

The Sheriff's Office collects from hotel and motel facilities a fee of 6% that is added to patrons lodging bills. During Fiscal Year 2015-16 the Sheriff collected \$658,362.50. The fees collected are placed into a restricted account and funds are used only to support Jefferson County Parks and Recreation and Jefferson County Travel and Tourism.

Animal Control:

The Animal Control Office is located at 161 Poor Farm Road, Kearneysville, near the Jefferson County Fair Grounds. The Office is open Monday-Friday 8:00 AM to 4:00 PM and on Saturday's from 10:00 AM to 2:00 PM. During Fiscal Year 2015-16 Animal Control Officers responded to:

- 1681 calls for assistance within the County and the municipal corporations in Jefferson County; an increase of 19.3% from the previous year and more than 315% more than two years ago.
- Picked up 549 dogs; a 31% increase of from the previous year and near 24% increase over two years
- Investigated 122 wildlife complaints; an increase 11% from the previous year and a 305% increase from 2 years ago
- 266 animal bites; an increase of 32% from the previous year and a 30% increase from two years ago.
- Welfare checks on 316 animals, an increase of 63% from the previous year and 333% increase over two years.
- Responded to 105 aggressive dog complaints; an increase of 11.5% from the previous year and 18.1% increase over two years.

Sheriff's Law Enforcement Administrative Office:

The Jefferson County Sheriff's Office [JCSO] Law Enforcement Office is located at 102 Industrial Boulevard, Kearneysville, WV. The Office hours were modified this fiscal year so patrons needing to pick up or drop off a report or application can now do so Monday through Friday from 8 AM till 6 PM. The office is the base location for all law enforcement deputies and houses the administrative staff for the law enforcement deputies.

Service of Process:

The Sheriff's Office served 2,016 pieces of process (summons) last year and executed 92 writs. This represents a decrease of 2.5% in summons and near 29% decrease in writs from the previous year.

Mental Health Issues:

Thirty [30] persons were detained by the Sheriff's Office under Court Orders to determine if they were in imminent danger of harming themselves or others under the State's Mental Hygiene statutes. This represents a near 19% decrease from the previous year. This is the second year in a row that the number of persons detained has decreased. Among those brought in for hearings 23 were court ordered to be involuntary committed and were transported to state approved institution. This represents a 22% increase from the previous year.

These detentions, hearings, medical clearance and transports demands significant time and prompt actions as most hearings are held at night and transports regularly occur after midnight. After a hearing is held and prior to transporting mental hygiene patients the detained individual must be medically cleared at a local hospital. That requires Sheriff's staff to take them to the hospital and stay with them normally for 2-4 hours before they are "cleared" to be transported. The time in manpower and transportation is significant last fiscal year it accounted for more than 13,000 miles and more than 800 hours of labor.

Concealed Weapons Permits:

A total of 861 persons were issued a permit to carry a concealed weapon during the last fiscal year. This is an increase of 26% from the previous year and a 9.3% increase from two years ago.

The law governing concealed carry was modified by the West Virginia Legislature this year. The new law allows most people to carry concealed in West Virginia without making an application, taking any training or having a criminal background check being conducted. Those that wish to carry their firearms out of state must complete an application and be found eligible after the applicant completes an approved training class; and the Sheriff reviews their application, conduct a criminal background check to determine the applicant is not a prohibited person (convicted felon or was involuntary committed under mental health statutes to a mental health facility; an alcoholic or is prohibited for certain convictions of impaired driving or domestic battery).The Sheriff is required to complete the review in 45 days. If denied a permit the applicant can appeal to Circuit Court.

Law Enforcement

The Sheriff's Office has primary responsibility to investigate crimes, patrol roads and promote the safety of the public within the 212 square miles of Jefferson County. Jefferson County is diverse in geographic features, permanent and transient population and attractions that draw thousands into the county on a daily basis. The Sheriff's Office reports deputies responded on average to more than 313 calls for service each week or 1,358 each month.

Call for Assistance:

The Sheriff's Office recorded 16,303 law enforcement calls/actions for service during this fiscal year. This is an increase of 3,263 from the prior year a 25% increase and a two year increase of 4,875 actions equating to a 42.6% increase during the past two years.

Arrests:

Sheriff's Deputies made 510 misdemeanor and 144 felony arrests last year an increase of 21.7% from 2014-15 and a 45.9% increase over the past two years.

Family and Person Protective Orders:

The Sheriff's Office served 262 Family Protective Orders [FPOs] and 75 Personal Protective Orders [PPOs] last year. This represents a reduction of 2 FPOs but an increase of 30 PPOs a 40% increase over the previous year and a 10.4% over the past two years.

FPO and PPOs have an extensive amount of work associated with it that requires deputies to go to the residence and normally remove the person from their domicile; secure and remove firearms, catalog them and secure them at the Sheriff's Office pending court disposition. Weapons removed are returned only after the Court issues an order to release them.

Home Confinement:

The Sheriff's Office provided home confinement services to 53 individuals during this fiscal year a decrease of 5 individuals [8.6% decrease] from the previous year but a 49% increase from 2 years ago when there were 26 individuals under supervision.

Those under court approved monitoring are tracked with a devices that monitors them 24 hours a day 7 days a week to insure that they are at their home, place of work or at an appropriate place based upon the home confinement requirements. This effort by the Sheriff is done in coordination with Circuit, Family, and Magistrate Courts and the Jefferson Day Report Center. Monitoring is helping to lower incarceration costs. While the number of persons arrested for felony and misdemeanors arrests went up 45.9% over the past 2 years but jail costs have had a modest decrease.

Citations/Accidents/DUI:

Deputies investigated 812 traffic accidents last year, a slight decrease from the previous year but an increase of more than 40% from two years ago. A total of 458 accidents reports were completed. Reports in serious car accidents especially those with personal injuries or extensive damage take many hours of time by highly trained deputies to conduct accident reconstruction reports.

Deputies charged 124 individuals with driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs. This represents a 17.8% increase from the previous year. Several deputies in Jefferson County are recognized annually by the Governor's Highway Safety Committee and Mothers against Drunk Drivers for their efforts.

Deputies wrote 665 citations noting in 775 violations of traffic laws a 13.5% increase from the previous year.

Courthouse Security:

The Sheriff has the responsibility to provide Court Security Officers [CSOs] in the Jefferson County Courthouse complex and its courtrooms. CSOs [Bailiffs] are trained and are armed and have a primary duty to provide safety and security within those buildings and in the Circuit and Magistrate Courtrooms.

The Sheriff's Office provided security at the Courthouse during the rehearsal and performances of "The Anvil" a play about the trial of John Brown; and for periodic weekend tours given by the National Park Service. In addition bailiffs assist with Juvenile and Adult Drug Court. .

Enhanced security cameras are giving us better views of courthouse buildings and their entrance areas. Dedicated staff monitors these cameras allowing Court Security Officers at entrances to concentrate their attention on those entering and exiting the buildings without being distracted. Safety enhancements to the buildings are constantly reviewed and annually grant funding is requested to enhance safety of those working and visiting Courthouse buildings.

Schools:

The Sheriff's Office continues to work closely with local federal, state and local law enforcement and Jefferson County Schools with a multijurisdictional law enforcement response to threats in schools. The effort has focused to inform and educate administrators, staff and students of appropriate actions to take to reduce risk and appropriate actions if a threat is in their building. The objective is to keep schools safe yet friendly places to work and study.

Sheriff's deputies periodically visits school to become familiar with the facility, staff and students to be seen as a friendly face to those who work, study and visit local schools.

The Sheriff's Office annually reviews school safety plans with school administrators and meet with the Superintendent and Board on any suggested policy and procedures to enhance safety.

Reserve Deputies:

The Jefferson County Deputy Sheriff's Reserves had 3 Cadets scheduled to complete the training this year. Reserve Cadets generally have no prior law enforcement certification and therefore must complete a 150 hour structured robust curriculum and on-the-job training. The Eastern Panhandle Deputy Sheriff Reserve Academy oversee by the Sheriffs of Berkeley, Jefferson and Morgan Counties is recognized by Blue Ridge Community College and cadets may earn college credits upon completion of the academy.

The Reserves completed 6,696 hours of training and service this year. This activity includes 1,063 assists to law enforcement officers on road patrols and targeted patrols on public roads and subdivisions, at accident scenes, and at many community events including the Arts and Crafts Festival, the Jefferson County Fair, Parks and Recreation dances at Sam Michael Park and other civic events in the County throughout the year.

Training:

Training for members of the Sheriff's Office is vital to keep deputies current on changes in the law; to enhance investigative skills for both criminal investigations and vehicle accidents; and to be prepared to take appropriate action both offensively and defensively to protect the public and themselves. All deputies are required to receive a minimum of 16 hours of state approved training and supervisors are required to receive at least 24 hours annually to maintain their law enforcement certification

Sheriff's Deputies received 3,125 hours of training, including 1,657 hours to two deputies that graduated from the WV State Police Training Academy. We are proud to note one of our deputies graduated as the top student in his class. The 3,125 hours were approved by the WV Division of Justice and Community Services' Law Enforcement Professional Standards Office. It is critical to keep law enforcement officers current on their training to enhance skills and to minimize adverse actions due to a lack of proper training. Deputies also participated in hundreds hours of K-9 training; Day Light and Low Light Shooting; Strategic Response and other training conducted under supervised conditions but not recorded with the Law Enforcement Professional Standards Office.

Last year two members of the Sheriff's Office received training that has qualified them to be recognized as "drug recognition experts" [DREs]. This designation is very helpful as an increasing portion of those stopped for impaired driving are under the influence of drugs.

Several deputies in the Sheriff's Office are designated and approved as "master trainers" allowing them to provide high quality state approved training locally without paying outside instructors; reducing travel time and costs.

Multijurisdictional Efforts to Curb Drugs

Jefferson County's Drug Threat

During this fiscal year Jefferson County was one of only 14 jurisdictions in the country admitted into an existing High Intensity Drug Trafficking Areas [HIDTAs]. We worked hard to get this designation since it allows us to work in a collaborative effort with many law enforcement authorities in the Washington-Baltimore area.

There are three main factors that influence the drug threat in Jefferson County and local law enforcement's ability to address the threat:

First, the Eastern Panhandle is in close proximity to three major drug markets: Washington, D.C. 60 miles away, Baltimore, MD 70 miles, and Philadelphia, PA, 171 miles. The Interstate Highway System directly links all three areas to Jefferson County and a traveler can reach both Washington, D.C. and Baltimore in about one hour. Because of the proximity to Washington, DC and Baltimore, these cities are the primary sources of drugs consumed and transported into and through Jefferson County.

Second, Jefferson County draws a large number of tourist and visitors. According to the State of West Virginia, major tourism venues attract approximately 4.3 million visitors each year, a number equal to nearly 180,000 for each law enforcement deputy sheriff in the county. Other jurisdiction have more visitors but few have such limited numbers of officers to deal with the traffic and other enforcement requirements that come with tourism and to patrol the county's 210 square miles.²

Based on an analysis of the Washington Baltimore area

Third, the transportation infrastructure of Jefferson County impacts Jefferson County’s drug trade. Jefferson County’s major State Highways Routes 9 and 340, provide a convenient alternative route for drug traffickers to avoid detection and interdiction along the two major Interstate highways in the area Interstate 70 and 81.

In the coming year, the Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office will be working with other law enforcement agencies in the Eastern Panhandle and with law enforcement agencies in Northwest Virginia to improve intelligence gathering and enhance collaborative efforts in a regional effort to disrupt and destroy drug trafficking in our region.

Drug Use

The misuse of illegal drugs continues to escalate. This problem continues with a plentiful supply of illegal drugs being sold to those addicted. This crisis is further complicated by the issue of the drugs being sold and consumed are in many cases inconsistent in their quality and potency. Heroin continues to be a major source of drug overdoses. This fiscal year the Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office responded to at least nine [9] incidents where a person either was dead or died at the scene or died shortly thereafter and eight [8] instances where the person was either revived at the scene or where reports indicate after being transported to a medical facility the person survived. These numbers do not include incidents in the municipal areas or where other law enforcement officers were the responding agency.

The reporting of these incidents and the follow up investigations continues to be a high priority for the Sheriff’s Office and our efforts in concert with medical responders continues to increase.

The area in and around our county continues to rank above the national average in use of cocaine, nonmedical use of pain relievers, illicit drug use other than marijuana and illicit drug dependence.³ Past year use of cocaine, prescription pain relievers, and any illicit drug other than marijuana range between 115% and 127% of the national average. In addition, the percent of persons dependent on illicit drugs is 118% of the national average. Only marijuana use in the Eastern Panhandle region is below the national average.

Drug Use in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia	
Statistic	As % of National Average
Marijuana Use in the Past Year	85%
Cocaine Use in the Past Year	116%

³ These figures represent a six-county area. Jefferson County’s population represents 21% of the population of the six counties.

Nonmedical Use of Pain Relievers in the Past Year	115%
Illicit Drug Use Other Than Marijuana in the Past Month	127%
Illicit Drug Dependence in the Past	118%
Source: Calculated from SAMHSA, Center for Behavioral Health Statistics and Quality, National Survey on Drug Use and Health, 2008, 2009, and 2010 (Revised March 2012); Tables 2, 6, 7, 8, and 20.	

Heroin is the number one drug abuse threat to Jefferson County. Federal, State and local law enforcement as well as this report appears to show that the use of illegal drugs continues to increase due to its availability and price. This drug crisis has multiple layers of impact to this community; loss of lives; workforce labor implications and a major byproduct of other illegal activities by those addicted especially: thefts, burglaries; prostitution and fraud.

High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area [HIDTA]

This year Jefferson County was admitted into the Washington/Baltimore HIDTA. This is a proactive and positive move to increase local efforts in coordination with other Federal State and local law enforcement to disrupt and destroy drug trafficking that comes into this area primarily from the Baltimore, Maryland area. The HIDTA initiative will hopefully have a positive impact on curtailing the availability of illegal drugs and provide additional funding for treatment services.

Drug Task Force:

Jefferson County Sheriff’s Office in conjunction with the Berkeley County Sheriff’s Office, Martinsburg Police Department, West Virginia State Police and the Federal Bureau of Investigations make up the Violent Crimes and Safe Streets Task Force here in the Eastern Panhandle. The Sheriff currently has on deputy assigned fulltime to the task force. This multiagency approach is needed as many of the drug and violent crimes in this region are inherently multijurisdictional.

Beyond the Violent Crimes and Safe Street Task Force the Sheriff, without any additional resources, created a two deputy detail to concentrate our efforts to make a concentrated effort to locate and arrest drug dealers. This effort is bringing a positive result in its first six [6] months a total of 45 arrests have been made for sale, possession and distribution of illegal drugs. 126 grams of crack cocaine; 694 illegal prescription pills; and 139 grams of heroin have been seized. Four vehicles used in drug trafficking and \$9,871 of drug sales money was seized.

Changes Implemented/Being Worked on to Improve Services:

During the past 4 years a number of changes have been made:

- Jefferson County was admitted into the Washington-Baltimore HIDTA.
- Updated the entire Administrative Rules; Regulations, Operational Policies and Procedures for the Sheriff's Office.
- Created a two deputy team to concentrate on arresting drug dealers.
- Improved public access to get administrative reports and papers by changing office hours to at the law enforcement to 8AM to 6PM Monday-Friday.
- Sheriff has worked with Corporation of Bolivar to increase law enforcement in their town after Harpers Ferry and Bolivar dissolved their police agreement.
- Create a two deputy K-9 team that is focus on stopping drug trafficking.
- Revised Shift changes to maximize coverage and increase productivity.
- Revised the "special deputy agreement" allowing municipal officers to assist in extraordinary situations and increased by adding selected federal law enforcement officers.
- Improve the Investigations Office to concentrate efforts on serious offenses.
- Instituted a comprehensive evaluation of all uniformed deputies.
- Ended a previous practice and now only allow deputies to wear their uniforms while working under the authority of the Sheriff.
- Reissued Range Use Agreements to restricted access to law enforcement entities; and to allow appropriate entities to use the facility under the supervision of the Sheriff's Office with the appropriate insurance with proceeds deposited into the County's General Fund.
- Jefferson County Board of Education approved to reimburse a portion of expenses for crossing guard and security at selected athletic events.
- Revised the schedule within the Animal Control Office to allow for better coverage and less overtime.
- Issued pistol safes to deputies to maximize gun security at home.
- Supported the Computer Aided Dispatching [CAD] system that has improved response time and reporting.
- Created a Strategic Response Team with 10 deputies who are trained to take appropriate actions at major crime events.
- Enhanced collaborative efforts utilizing a county-wide Accident Reconstruction Experts and Drug Recognition Experts to enhance the combined resources of local departments and the Sheriff's Office to respond to major accidents and impaired driving within the county.
- Designated Animal Control Officers as Humane Officers thereby improving their ability to prosecute animal cruelty laws and ordinances.
- Removed the reserved parking sign for the Sheriff in front of the office.

Sheriff's Official National, State Involvements:

Member of the National Sheriff's Association

Member of the WV Sheriff's Association

Member of the Board of Directors of the WV Sheriff's Association

Governor's appointee: Commission on Drunk Driving Prevention.

Sheriff's Association Representative, Supreme Court's WV Central State Mental Health Registry.

Director, Eastern Panhandle Violent Crimes and Safe Streets Initiative

Law Enforcement Staffing:

Law Enforcement:

1 Chief of Staff

2 Lieutenants

5 Sergeants,

7 Corporals

7 Deputies First Class

4 Deputies

5 Clerical Staff

Tax Office:

1 Chief Tax Deputy

6 Assistants

Animal Control

1 Animal Control Supervisor

4 Animal Control Officers

Courthouse/Court Security Officers

1 Chief Bailiff

20 mostly part-time Court Security Officers/Bailiffs

Process/Trip Guards/Home Confinement:

1 fulltime; 1 part-time employee

10 as needed part-time on-call special deputies

Needs:

Law Enforcement:

The current budget had no funds for vehicles. This is an issue that needs to be revisited. Given the high call volume and a trend that it is constantly going up in order to improve public safety and response times additional deputies are needed to play a bigger role in keeping our community safe.

Based on the national standards the Jefferson County Sheriff's Office should have a minimum of 37.7 deputies. *

[Minimum Federal Standards call for 1 officer per 1,500 residents. [Number of Deputies in Jefferson County is not high in comparison to other counties in WV, and in adjoining jurisdictions – e.g. Fayette County with a population of 46,000 has 32 deputies; Marshall County with a 33,000 has 23 Deputies (one deputy per 1,439 citizens; Jefferson has one deputy for more than, 1,800 citizens)]*

Court Security Officers [Bailiff] Services:

There will be a need to continue to increase the number of Court Security Officers/Bailiffs and Trip Guards as workload demands continue to rise.

Tax Office:

One staff position was cut from the Sheriff's Tax Office budget two years ago. The current Tax Office facility is inadequate to meet the demands of the thousands of persons who frequent that office annually. A new facility and or major modification of this facility are needed. Funding is needed to enhance electronic payments.

Animal Control:

The Sheriff requested and the Commission approved to designate Animal Control Officers as Humane Officers allowing them file criminal complaints. This effort has had a positive impact when animals are believed to be neglected or abused.

The Animal Control facility is in bad condition and a new facility is needed. One or more new vehicles are needed to meet the increase demand for services. .