

2023 Annual REPORT

YOUR PROFESSIONAL, COMMUNITY-ORIENTED POLICE DEPARTMENT

\$\$\$ 501-776-5948

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CONTENTS

- 3- Contact Info
- 4- Chief's Welcome
- **6- Mission Statement**
- 7- Detective Mike Lett
- **8- Department Demographics**
- 9- Crime Statistics
- 10- Overdose Response Team
- 11- BNPD Featured in Glock Magazine
- 13- Promotions, Retirements, Awards
- 20- K9 Unit
- **21- Community Outreach**
- 22- Recruitment



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K-9 Nino joined BNPD in 2023. He is trained and certified as a Narcotics and Patrol dog by the National Narcotic Detector Dogs Association. He is certified to alert to the odors of four narcotics and aides officers in the apprehension of suspects. He is pictured here with his handler, Officer Chase Collins. POLICE K-

Chief's Welcome

A message from your Chief:

I am honored to serve as your Chief of Police for the City of Benton, and to present to you, our 2023 BNPD Annual Report. This report was designed to share the quality of work our department is producing with our citizens.

Our report includes charts, stats, and pictures of our personnel and our department during 2023. Although this report can't truly reflect everything our department does for our city, it can give you some idea of the efforts made to ensure our city is a great place to live and work. Don't get me wrong, this report is a very valuable source of information, but no amount of data can fully represent the dedicated service of our BNPD employees. However, rest assured the quality of work our employees produce is second to none. Each and every one of us wants nothing but the best for everyone. To our dedicated employees, thank you so much for everything you do that makes a difference in the lives of our citizens and in the quality of life in Benton.

In 2023, the Benton Police Department had a budgeted workforce of 82 Certified Police Officers and 12 Civilian Employees, who serve a community of 35,014 residents. Although we will discuss various divisions throughout this report, I will touch on a couple of impressive additions we made during 2023. One of those additions is within our largest division: our Special Operations Division, which houses our School Resource Officer (SRO) Program. This division consists of a Lieutenant, Sergeant and nine School Resource Officers, which was an increase from the previous year, by one SRO. We have an SRO in every Benton Public School and in our Saline County Career Technical Campus.



Chief Scotty Hodges

Continued on page 5...

Chief's Welcome

Another addition we were successful in achieving in 2023 will require some explanation. Benton is no different than any other area of the nation when it comes to Opioid use. It is not something new to us. However, we have seen an increase in Opioid-related overdoses and deaths over the past few years. This has been a huge challenge for Law **Enforcement and First Responders all** over the country. It has heightened our awareness and caused us to change our path and view of this crisis. Believing we have an obligation and responsibility to fight this epidemic, we started our Narcan program in 2016. We thought we were doing everything possible to combat this addiction, but we now know we were not. We rethought our approach and have changed how we respond to these calls.

In 2023, we applied for and were awarded a grant through the Arkansas Opioid Recovery Partnership program. This grant allowed us to add two positions to our staffing. We now have an Opioid Recovery Specialist and a Detective assigned as our Opioid Investigator. We have to partner together and use all the resources at our disposal to combat this issue.

Not only is our approach different, the way we look at these cases is different as well. Yes, the Opioid epidemic is about someone who is suffering from an addiction, but it's much more than that. Their family and friends are also suffering from this addiction. We plan to make a difference in their lives as well. In 2022, we shared with you that although the crime rate had increased all over our nation, the City of Benton saw its lowest crime rates in more than a decade. What an amazing accomplishment for our city and the hard-working members of the Benton Police Department. I am extremely proud to announce, in 2023, we saw an overall crime decrease of 9% when compared to our 2022 crime rates. The City of Benton is truly blessed.

Thank you so much for taking the time to look through our BNPD 2023 Annual Report. I am humbled, yet honored to have served the City of Benton for the past 27 years, with just a little over 6 years as your Chief of Police. Mayor Tom Farmer, our Benton Council Members, and our Benton Civil Service Commission have been amazing to work alongside. Our entire department is so appreciative of the relationship we have developed with our community and our residents, and as always, we appreciate your continued support of the Benton Police Department.

Scotty L. Hodges Chief of Police Benton Police Department

Mission Statement

Our mission is to provide our community with a professional, progressive, community-oriented police department. We strive to serve our citizens with the utmost courtesy and concern for their needs with an emphasis on integrity and fairness and conduct ourselves in such a manner as to instill confidence and pride in the Benton Police Department by the community. We strive to protect the constitutional rights of everyone with the purpose of creating an atmosphere of safety and security in our community.

In accomplishing the above mission, we continually direct our efforts toward the following:

-Recognizing the spirit of our department is one of helping people and providing assistance at every opportunity regardless of convenience.

-Striving to gain community support and build relationships in the suppression of criminal activity.

-Aggressively responding to criminal activity in a manner consistent with safeguarding the rights of all citizens.

-Realizing the employees of the department are integral to the organization, we strive to help them in their performance and development.

-Aiming to develop leadership throughout the department in recognition of the need for outstanding and consistent leadership on multiple levels.

-Consistently demanding the highest degree of integrity, professionalism, and proactiveness from all employees.

YOU BELONG HERE

Detective James "Mike" Lett

Detective Mike Lett succumbed to critical injuries on Nov. 8, 2023, following a vehicle crash while on-duty Oct. 28.

A United States Air Force veteran, Detective Lett served in law enforcement for over 30 years with Benton Police Department, Saline County Sheriff's Office, Pulaski County Sheriff's Office, Arkansas Attorney General's Office, Maumelle Police Department, and Salt Lake City Police Department.

He is survived by his four daughters, son, two sisters, adopted parents, and two grandchildren and is dearly missed by them and all his blue family.

Detective Lett was honored with an enormous display of support from law enforcement agencies across the state as he was transported from the Arkansas State Crime Lab in Little Rock to Benton. Later, a foot processional in downtown Benton preceded a memorial ceremony on Veterans Day.

Captain Kevin Russell expressed departmentwide sentiments:

"He was just a phenomenal partner and also a mentor to a lot of the younger detectives. He will always be remembered as a leader whose many years in law enforcement made him stand out. He was with our agency since 2019 and in those few years, all agreed he was a wonderful addition to our agency."

He added that putting Detective Lett's impact into words was an insurmountable task and that his legacy will live on through those who knew and loved him both blood and blue.

"His impact on our agency alone has been enormous and will continue. He was a teacher through and through, and that lives on in his coworkers both at Benton PD as well as agencies across the state. We're all better officers and humans having known him, and it was a privilege to have had that honor."

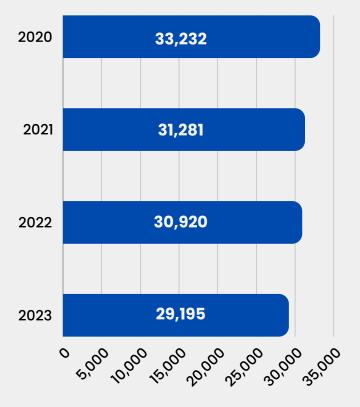


Department Demographics

Sworn	Number	Percentage
Male	68	90.8
Female	7	9.2
White	62	82.7
Black	6	8
Hispanic	7	9.3
No College	26	34.7
Some College	12	16
Associates	7	9.3
Bachelors	29	38.7
Masters	1	1.3

Crime Statistics

The Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program was conceived in 1929 by the International Association of Chiefs of Police to meet a need for reliable, uniform crime statistics for the nation. In 1930, the FBI was tasked with collecting, publishing, and archiving those statistics. Today, several annual statistical publications, such as the comprehensive Crime in the United States, are produced from data provided by nearly 17,000 law enforcement agencies across the United States.



Calls for Service Comparison from 2020 through 2023

Accidents- 1,638 Calls for Service- 29,195 Incident Reports Processed- 16,248

Violent Crimes

Homicide- 1 (-67%) Robbery- 13 (no change) Rape- 14 (+40%) Aggravated assault- 117 (+39%)

Property Crimes

Burglary- 112 (-25%) Theft- 729 (-11%) Motor vehicle theft- 68 (-15%) Arson- 2 (-67%)

Arrest Stats

Warrants Served- 2,807 Felony Arrests- 1,727 Misdemeanor Arrests- 1,618 Traffic Stops- 9,327 Traffic Citations- 3,378 Warning Citations- 1,075 DUI Arrests- 6 DWI Arrests- 153

BNPD Overdose Response Team

In May 2023, Benton Police Department was awarded funds through the Arkansas Opioid Recovery Partnership (ARORP) to form an Overdose Response Team.

Overdose Response Teams through ARORP enable law enforcement agencies to hire an overdose investigator and a Peer Recovery Specialist.

The investigator seeks out suppliers for prosecution with assistance from the DEA Tactical Drug Division and the Peer Recovery Specialist provides counseling and follow-up to overdose victims regarding treatment and recovery services, as well as engages in community education regarding substance abuse.

A certified Peer Recovery Specialist (PRS) was hired to help develop the new Overdose Response Team and implement peer services. A PRS is in long-term recovery and provides peer services to those battling substance abuse.

This position assists members of the community in accessing much needed resources for recovery, organizes community events and provides educational classes and Narcan training for all members of the community. A recovery rally was held in December, and our PRS, along with BNPD officers, delivered gifts to several clients in residential recovery to show support for their difficult decision.

Perhaps the most important statistic of all, in six months' time, the Overdose Response Team assisted 14 individuals in getting treatment.



The Benton, Arkansas Police Department selected the GLOCK 45 MOS as their standard duty pistol. The G45 is rapidly becoming the

BENTON ARKANSAS IS GLOCK COUNTRY

ARTICLE BY ANDRE' M. DALL'AU PHOTOS COURTESY BENTON ARKANSAS P.D.

uring WWII, the mineral-rich area around Benton, Arkansas was close to being the center of the country, and not only because of its location in the heartland. Saline County was strategically essential to America winning WWII due to its Bauxite mines: the aluminum-rich ore provided over 90% of the aluminum used in WWII. Undoubtedly, the B-17's that bombed the Third Reich and the B-29's that wreaked havoc on Japan were constructed with aluminum from Saline County's Bauxite.

The citizens, visitors, and tourists in Benton are served by the Benton Police Department, who recently went through an extensive and thorough evaluation process to replace their duty sidearm. Although, law enforcement officers have a variety of tools and weapons that can be used based on varying threat levels, their carry pistol is their first and most accessible defense weapon. Therefore, their pistol of choice must be reliable and accurate.

TIME FOR AN UPGRADE

When the Benton Police Department decided to select a new duty pistol, Captain Eric Haworth oversaw the thoughtful and deliberate selection process. "We looked at a variety of the best handguns on the market and found that the officers were the most familiar with the operation of the GLOCK," he said, also noting that "together with our officers wanting it, and based on the simplicity, reliability, cost, and previous experience in having other GLOCK duty pistols, we selected "Based on the simplicity, reliability, cost, and previous experience of having other GLOCK duty pistols, we selected the GLOCK 45 MOS."

the GLOCK 45 MOS (Modular Optic System) as the regular patrol duty sidearm, with our SWAT Team choosing the GLOCK 34 MOS, and our undercover officers deciding on the GLOCK 43X, all in 9x19mm." The 9x19 was selected because of the efficiency of the modern loads available that provide ballistics to rival the .40 and .45 AUTO for effectiveness as well as variety, availability, ease of training, and cost of ammo.

Benton PD is far from being alone in their decision to carry the GLOCK 45. This pistol is quickly becoming the preferred sidearm of more and more law enforcement agencies and departments. Why? Well, the crossover G45 MOS has all the improvements and benefits of the Gen5, as well as combining the compact slide of the G19 with a full-size frame of the G17. In addition to the useful full frame, the G45's surface-hardened nDLC finished, shorter slide offers front serrations (FS) with the incredibly accurate GLOCK Marksmanship Barrel (GMB). The



G45 MOS frame has a flared magazine well, a more smooth and crisp trigger pull, enhanced texture, reversible magazine catch, and ambidextrous slide stop lever. Like all GLOCK pistols, the G45 MOS, G34 MOS, and G43X have the GLOCK SAFE ACTION trigger system that provides a consistent trigger pull with three passive, independently-operating mechanical safeties that sequentially disengage as the trigger is purposefully depressed by the shooter and that automatically re-engage when the trigger is reset.

MOS & LAW ENFORCEMENT

The GLOCK MOS allows for an easy-to-mount reflex sight (Micro Red Dot) on the pistol's slide using OEM plates that adapt to almost every Micro Red Dot footprint on the market. The use of Micro Red Dot reflex sights by civilians and law enforcement has trended because of how they greatly outperform iron sights in low light, increase situational awareness, and provide focus on the target quicker than establishing iron sight alignment. Benton PD selected the Vortex Venom Red Dot for their G45 MOS and G34 MOS pistols after a year's worth of research and comparison based on clarity, warranty, cost, and ability to change out its battery without removal of the unit from the slide.

Captain Haworth, who is both the SWAT Captain and oversees training for the department, noted that after the transition to the new GLOCKs, the Benton police officers' time to qualify decreased while scores increased tremendously. Captain Haworth said, "I was shooting a consistent 493 out of a possible 500 before the change, and with the G34 MOS I immediately shot a 498. We have a departmental "Top Gun" competition between officers based on their yearly qualification scores." Captain Haworth continued, "as a result



Every call that any officer or deputy responds to is filled with unknowns and possible dangers. That can be mitigated by experience and training.

of the consistently higher scores from our officers now with the G45, we are going to have to change the criteria for our shooting qualification "top shot" competition to a differently scored shoot-off between officers because we are getting so many consistent near perfect scores!" Captain Haworth laughed and mentioned, "the G45 has literally made our qualification process too easy! The GLOCK pistols made officers who already were high scorers more phenomenal and because of the easier learning curve with the GLOCK, the few that needed more attention were able to improve their skills very quickly."

NOT MUCH TO FIX

As one of a half dozen qualified Benton PD GLOCK Armorers, Captain Haworth knows the GLOCK inside and out, and that its robust quality is due to GLOCK's brilliant simplicity of design. He admitted that being a GLOCK Armorer is an easy job with very little to do. "In the twenty-two years I have been around here, I can't recall a single problem that we've had with any of the GLOCKs we have had," he said. "We've had zero maintenance issues with our GLOCKs. I spend my time swapping around the reversible magazine catch and helping others who have questions about their GLOCK."

Captain Haworth uses realistic and frequent training to maintain the skills of the Benton PD officers, so training assets include GLOCK 17P inert pistols for cold training on practicing proper grip, loading and unloading, sight alignment, trigger squeeze, and disassembling. The G17P cannot chamber or load actual ammunition and are colored in bright red to be easily identified in use, but are identical in handling, weight, and balance to a normal GLOCK. The GLOCK 17T blue guns are used for only the discharging of colored marking rounds that leave a paint scar where it hits and a strong physical reminder to the recipient that they made a mistake! Captain Haworth has been on the receiving end of multiple training impact rounds and admitted, "it might hurt, but it's a temporary pain, but gives a distinct and lasting motivating memory!"

The Benton Police Department faces the everyday issues of most law enforcement agencies, with the increased strain of difficult recruitment and retention in addition to keeping the peace in a part of the country that sees tornados, freezing cold winters, and dry, dusty summers. Now with their G45 MOS, G34 MOS, and G43X pistols they will be able to train, protect, and serve their fellow Arkansans in an unforgiving environment with what is probably the most reliable and most popular service pistols available. For more information about those and other law enforcement and civilian pistols, visit us.glock. com. For information about training offered by GLOCK, visit glocktraining.com. (e)

Promotions

In June 2023, BNPD promoted two officers. Officer Brett Davidson was promoted to Patrol Sergeant and Sergeant Seth Hopkins was promoted to Patrol Lieutenant.

Sgt. Davidson graduated from Sheridan High School and applied in 2016 for the department's cadet position. After serving in that role until his 21st birthday, he was hired as a BNPD officer and attended the law enforcement training academy. Thereafter, he earned a technical certificate in law enforcement from Southern Arkansas University Technical College.

During his time on patrol, Officer Davidson has been awarded multiple life-saving awards, and in 2019, he became a Drug Recognition Expert and Field Training Officer.

In 2022, his division was awarded the Unit Achievement Award. He has served as a law enforcement instructor and firearms instructor and is in his seventh year as an officer of the Benton Police Department.

Lt. Hopkins was born in Metairie, LA, and graduated from Enterprise Attendance Center in Brookhaven, Mississippi, in 2006. He received his Bachelor of Arts Degree in Criminal Justice from the University of Southern Mississippi in 2010. Lt. Hopkins began his law enforcement career with the Benton Police Department in 2013, where he was assigned to the Patrol Division. He became a Field Training Officer in 2016, and in 2017, received the Benton Police Department Narcan Save Award. In 2019, he received the Officer of the Quarter and Officer of the Year Award. In 2022, he received the Narcan Save Award once again and was a part of the Unit Achievement Award.

He is an Accident Reconstructionist and has also served our department as a Law Enforcement Instructor, Firearms Instructor and a Field Training Officer.

Detective Corey Green was promoted to Patrol Sergeant in December 2023.

He is the son of Donnie and Pam Green and has called Benton home since 1996. A 2012 graduate of Benton High School, he attended Pulaski Technical College and later Henderson State University, where he received a Bachelor of Science in Interdisciplinary Studies.

He began his law enforcement career with Benton PD in April 2017, graduating from the Arkansas Law Enforcement Training Academy Class 2017-B in August 2017. He has served in the Patrol Division, School Resource Officer Division, and Special Investigations Division, as well as specific Task Force assignments.

A member of the BNPD S.W.A.T. team since January 2019, he also serves as a Field Training Officer, holds a law enforcement instructor certification, and is a firearms instructor. Additionally, he holds a Defensive Tactics Instructor Certification with Gracie Survival Tactics and is a recent graduate of the Narcotics Officer Certificate Program.

See photos on Page 14...

Page 13

Promotions (Cont.)



Sgt. Brett Davidson pictured with Chief Hodges

Sgt. Corey Green pictured with Asst. Chief Besancon (center) and Captain Russell





Lt. Seth Hopkins pictured with Chief Hodges

Award Recipients

BNPD held its annual awards ceremony/banquet for 2023 on February 22, 2024, at the Enclave at White Furniture.

Numerous awards were given/received, and we were honored to have the family of fallen Detective Mike Lett join us.

The following is a list of award recipients for 2023 and their honor(s) received. Photos follow.

Officer of the Year: Detective Jarred McCauley

Rookie of the Year: Officer Austin Green

Chief's Award: Lt. Brian Bigelow

Top Gun Award: Officer Abdias Valdez

Leadership Award: Lt. Seth Hopkins

Meritorious Service Award: Capt. Eric Haworth

SRO of the Year: Officer Josh Mungle

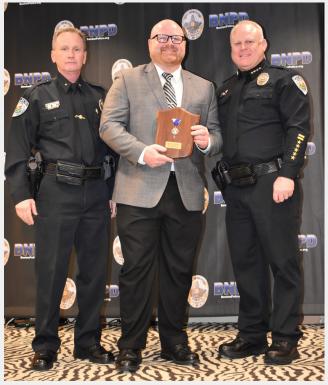
Citizen of the Year: John Gathright

Life-Saving Award: Officers Charles Anderson, Jacob Griffith, Brandus Howard, Walker Brown, Katie Parker, Edward Niemczyk, Det. Zachary Wisenor, and Lt. Seth Hopkins

Narcan Save Award:

Officers Charles Anderson, Laura Chandler, Austin Green, Brandus Howard, Jacob Griffith, and Ryan Roush

Congratulations to all on your accomplishments!



Officer of the Year: Detective Jarred McCauley is pictured with Assistant Chief Jeff Besancon (L) and Chief Scotty Hodges (R).

Awards (Cont.)



Rookie of the Year: Officer Austin Green (second from left) is pictured with Chief Scotty Hodges, Capt. Kevin Russell, and Asst. Chief Jeff Besancon



Leadership Award: Lt. Seth Hopkins (third from left) is pictured with Capt. Kevin Russell, Chief Scotty Hodges, and Asst. Chief Jeff Besancon.



Narcan Save Award: - Left to Right- Chief Scotty Hodges, Officer Ryan Roush, Officer Brandus Howard, Officer Jacob Griffith, Officer Austin Green, Officer Laura Chandler, Officer Charles Anderson, Capt. Patrick Baker, and Asst. Chief Jeff Besancon

Awards (Cont.)



Life Saving Award: -Left to Right- Officer Edward Niemczyk (wife accepting in his absence), Detective Zach Wisenor, Officer Katie Parker, Lt. Seth Hopkins, Officer Jacob Griffith, Officer Brandus Howard, Officer Charles Anderson, Officer Walker Brown, and Chief Scotty Hodges



Capt. Eric Haworth displays a painting from the family of fallen Detective Mike Lett to be displayed at the department. He was instrumental in making sure Det. Lett's family's needs were met throughout arrangements and beyond. We are grateful for his efforts as well as their kindness and support.



Meritorious Service Award: Capt. Eric Haworth (center) is pictured with Chief Scotty Hodges and Asst. Chief Jeff Besancon

Awards (Cont.)



Citizen of the Year: John Gathright is pictured with Chief Scotty Hodges. As a long-time staff member of First Baptist Church, Gathright has been instrumental in providing support to BNPD in the form of training facilities, equipment, and personnel- among others. We're grateful for his generosity and contribution to the department/community.



School Resource Officer of the Year: Officer Josh Mungle



Chief's Award: Lt. Brian Bigelow



Top Gun Award: Officer Abdias Valdez

Page 18

Retirement- Lt. Jeff Kling

Lt. Kling, the son of Barbara and Herbert Kling, was born in Little Rock and raised in Mabelvale. He has two sons.

A graduate of McClellan High School, he holds a Bachelor of Arts in Criminal Justice and Accounting from the University of Arkansas at Little Rock.

Lt. Kling began his law enforcement career as a reserve deputy for the Saline County Sheriff's Office. In July of 1996, he joined the Benton Police Department and was promoted to Corporal in November of 1998. In July 2001, he was promoted to Sergeant, and in November 2012, he was promoted to Lieutenant.

He has served in many positions and divisions within the department: Patrol, Criminal Investigations, Special Investigations, Communications (dispatch) to name a few. He served as S.W.A.T. Commander, Law Enforcement Instructor, Firearms Instructor, Radar Instructor, Field Training Officer, and Rifle and Glock Armorer.

Shortly after being employed in 1996, Lt. Kling received a letter of commendation recognizing his heroic effort during a traffic accident where a fuel tanker truck had overturned and caused an explosion. He received the Medal of Valor as a result. He also received the Leadership Award in 2015. Lt. Kling was a long-time member of the Benton Fraternal Order of Police, where he served in many capacities to include President.

THANK YOU for all your years of dedicated service to the City of Benton and its citizens, and congratulations on all of your accomplishments.

Chief Hodges is pictured holding the shadow box gifted to Lt. Kling, along with a few photos of Lt. Kling from then and now.



K9 Unit: Year in Review

The year 2023 brought the addition of a new K-9 to BNPD but also the retirement of veteran K-9, Sam.

Nino and his handler Officer Chase Collins trained at Ventosa Kennel, Inc. at the beginning of 2023. During their training, they became proficient in narcotics detection and in tracking and apprehension of individuals. Upon graduation, Nino earned his certification through the National Narcotic Detector Dog Association (NNDDA), an organization that certifies K-9 officers in Narcotics and Patrol work.

Near the end of 2023, K-9 Sam, our longestserving K-9 to date, began suffering from a common disorder known as spondylosis (degenerative arthritis). The condition made it necessary for Sam to retire from working as a Police Service K-9.

Throughout his career, he achieved approximately 2,000 hours of training, several hundred deployments for narcotic searches, multiple suspect surrenders, and several tracks for suspects. He was officially retired at the end of 2023 and allowed to stay with his handler Officer Miles French as a family dog.

K-9 officers are an important resource to our department as well as the community as a whole. They are credited with taking several pounds of narcotics off the streets of Benton (and beyond), and they have helped their handlers and other officers apprehend multiple dangerous suspects.



K-9 Sam and Officer Miles French



Officer Chase Collins with K-9 Nino

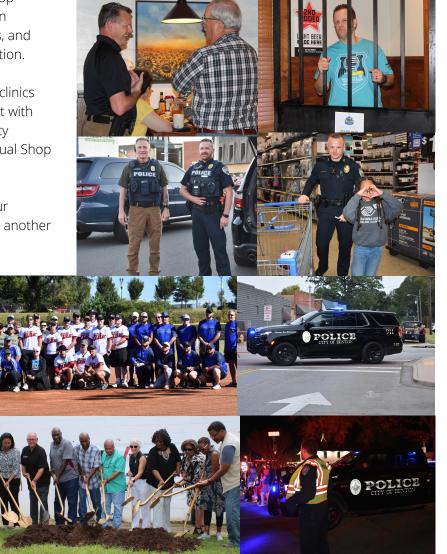
Community Outreach

The Benton Police Department strives to always be a proactive agency. This includes interacting with the community we serve as much as possible outside of strictly law enforcement encounters.

The year 2023 brought multiple opportunities for community events, and we enjoyed participating in every one. From the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics to their Tip A Cop events and all of the awesome downtown Benton Third Thursday festivals, parades, and holiday events, we enjoyed every interaction.

We also continued the monthly car seat clinics and our now annual Softball Tournament with Benton Fire, Bryant PD, and Saline County Sheriff's Office to raise funds for the annual Shop with Our Cops event.

Please enjoy a look back with some of our favorite photos... and we look forward to another great year of outreach.





Recruitment

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Call 501-776-5983 or email recruiting@bentonpolice.org with questions!



THE RIGHT CHOICE FOR YOUR FUTURE.

Starting Base Pay: \$51,000 PLUS:

Holiday Pay Starting at \$2,353 (for 12 holidays)

Clothing Allowance is \$480 for first full year- \$1,980/year thereafter

Certificate Pay: \$600 Annually for Basic, General, Intermediate, Advanced, Senior, & Instructor Certificates; \$900 Annually for Paramedic & Bilingual- up to \$5,400 Annually

Degree Pay: \$600, \$1,200, \$1,800 Annually for Associate, Bachelor's, & Master's Respectively

Starting Patrol Officers Can Expect to Make At Least \$56,383.

Home Storage Unit Program, FTO Pay, Full Employee Medical, Dental, & Vision (FREE for employee only) plus Family Coverage Options (only \$285/month)

CALL 501-776-5983 TO SCHEDULE YOUR APPOINTMENT & SEE WHAT BNPD CAN DO FOR YOU!

Apply at www.bentonpolice.org