

# 2024 ANNUAL REPORT



**SEMINOLE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE**  
SHERIFF DENNIS M. LEMMA



# Heartfelt Appreciation to Our Community

The Seminole County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) would like to express its heartfelt gratitude to the community we have the honor to serve. Your steadfast support of our organization's men and women has been vital to our mission of ensuring safety and security across the county.

We take pride in being part of a community that embodies compassion and collaboration. We are truly grateful for the individuals and organizations that contribute to our shared well-being. The SCSO remains committed to serving you with integrity and transparency.







# SEMINOLE COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

SHERIFF DENNIS M. LEMMA

**MISSION:**  
**TO ENHANCE THE QUALITY  
OF LIFE BY REDUCING  
CRIME AND THE FEAR OF CRIME  
IN SEMINOLE COUNTY, FLORIDA**







# Welcome to the 2024 Annual Report

We are proud to present the 2024 annual report of the Seminole County Sheriff's Office, which reflects our strong commitment to the community. Our agency focuses on adapting to residents' needs through modern policing strategies that enhance safety and quality of life in Seminole County.

In June, I was honored to have been re-elected as your Sheriff without opposition, which reflects the community's trust in our organization and level of service. Building trust and ensuring citizen satisfaction is central to our mission. We create solutions that foster strong relationships and unity by engaging with the community and addressing their concerns. Tackling critical issues like the opioid crisis, substance use disorders, and mental health services remains a top priority. While we have made significant progress, we acknowledge the ongoing challenges and continue to partner with the community to address them - simply stated, the hard work lies ahead.

Additionally, I am proud to report that Seminole County continues to enjoy historically low crime rates, showcasing our collective achievements. Our commitment to public safety drives our efforts to use resources effectively and seek innovative service methods. By staying proactive and adaptable, we aim to enhance our public safety initiatives, responding to the diverse needs of our communities.

Together, we are working towards a safer, more resilient future for Seminole County.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in white ink that reads "Dennis M. Lemma".

Sheriff Dennis M. Lemma



# 2024 Crime Stats

The Sheriff's Office's commitment to safety and security is evident in the County's historically low crime rates. Through community engagement, efficient policing strategies, and educational programs, unincorporated Seminole County last year saw a **20.3% decrease in Part 1 crimes** (the most serious types of crime), and continues to be a model for maintaining a peaceful and secure environment. This dedication benefits both residents and visitors alike while ensuring our County remains a desirable place to live, work, and visit.





# Uniform Crime Reporting Program



The Uniform Crime Reporting (UCR) Program produces dependable statistics that serve law enforcement. It also offers valuable information for criminal justice students, researchers, media professionals, and the general public.

UCR gathers data that can function as a report card for communities. This submitted data allows for comparisons between various jurisdictions, as well as across state and national levels. More than 18,000 law enforcement agencies in the United States contribute to this effort, creating a comprehensive overview of crime statistics and trends.

Here are our stats from 2024:

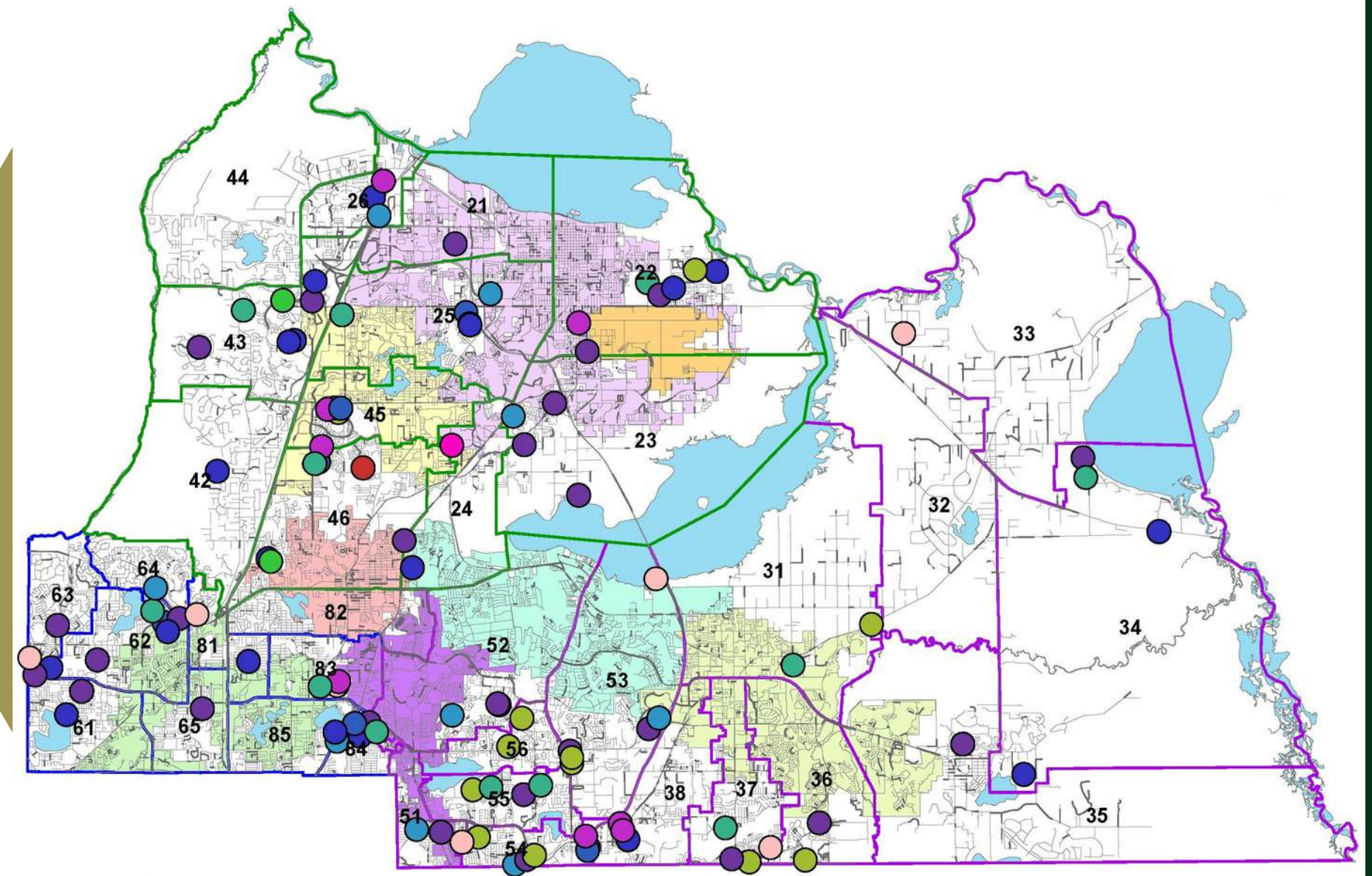
	2023	2024	% Change
Violent Offenses			
Murder	9	4	-55.6
Rape	62	48	-22.6
Robbery	34	34	0.0
Aggravated Assault	315	217	-14.0
Violent Offense Total	420	357	-15.0
Violent Crime Rate	181.3	153.3	-15.4
Property Offenses			
Burglary	227	138	-39.2
Larceny	1457	1197	-17.8
Motor Vehicle Theft	168	118	-29.8
Property Offense Total	1852	1453	-21.5
Property Crime Rate	799.2	624	-21.9
Total Index Offenses	2272	1810	-20.3
Clearance Rate for Index Offenses	30.6	296	-3.2



Want to see what happened in your neighborhood and near your business last year? Our monthly crime maps indicate Part 1 Crimes which have been reported to the Sheriff's Office for the respective month and include only those reported in unincorporated Seminole County. If the incident resulted in more than one offense, only the most serious is recorded and displayed on these maps.

(For example, if a crime occurred which included Aggravated Assault and Burglary, only the Aggravated Assault would be displayed since it is the more serious crime.)

Click [here](#) to see the crime maps.





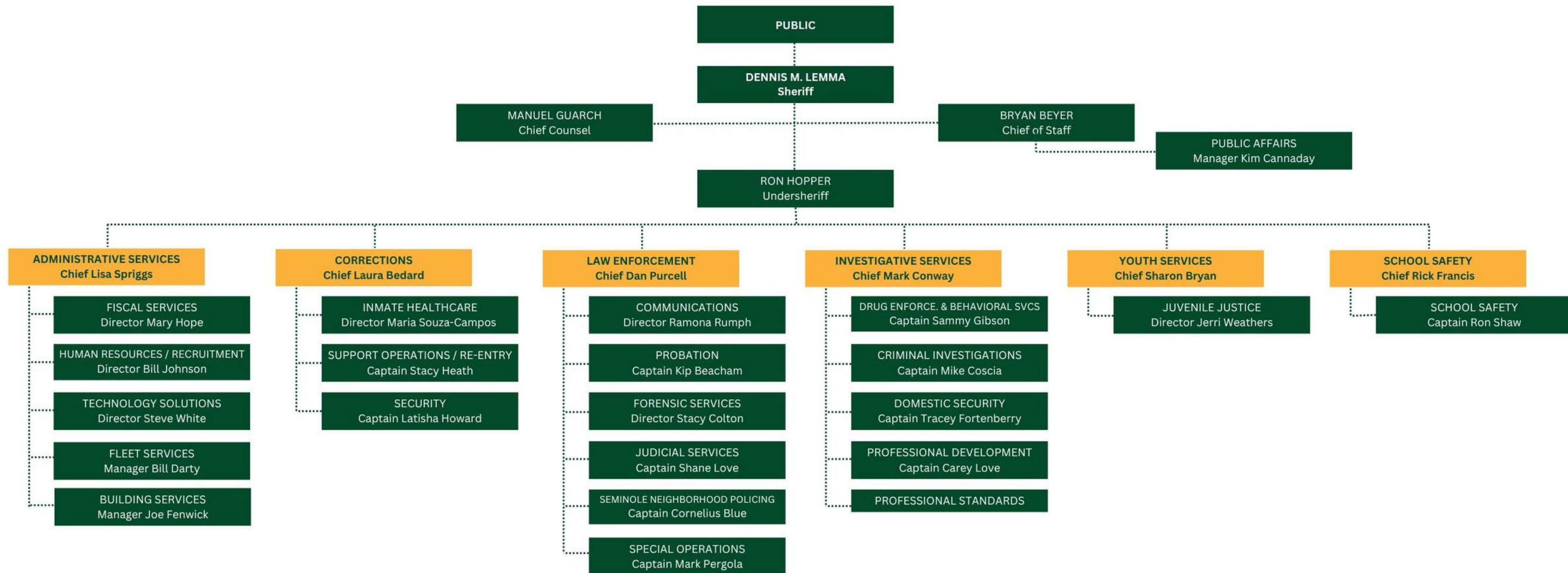
## SCSO Executive Command Staff





# 2024 ORGANIZATIONAL CHART

## Chain of Command & How We Work Together





# Maintaining a safe and strong Seminole County through **strategic** **initiatives**



## Commitment

Our commitment to serving Seminole County effectively is unwavering. We have developed a comprehensive plan that highlights our dedication to ensuring a safe and secure community. This approach encompasses a variety of objectives and actions designed to enhance our organization and foster positive relationships with the community we serve.



## Engagement

Our main goal is to improve public safety throughout Seminole County. We prioritize establishing strong partnerships with community members, local businesses, and stakeholders. A collaborative approach is essential to meet the community's various needs. In addition, we are committed to keeping the community engaged and informed through a variety of programs and initiatives.



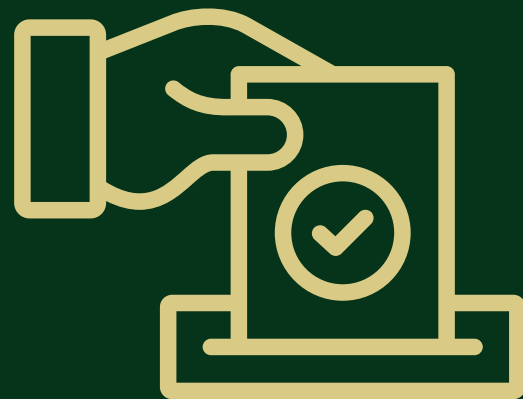
## Collaboration



# Sheriff Dennis M. Lemma re-elected

On June 14th, Sheriff Dennis Lemma was re-elected to his third term as Seminole County Sheriff without opposition, coinciding with his 32nd year serving at the Sheriff's Office, a testament to his longstanding commitment and dedication to the community.

On January 7th, 2025, retired Seminole County Sheriff Don Eslinger formally swore in Sheriff Dennis Lemma for his third term.





# Honoring Lives, Inspiring Change: A Partnership with the Victoria's Voice Foundation

## Uniting Local and National Leaders in the Fight Against the Community Leadership

This year, the Seminole County Sheriff's Office proudly partnered with the Victoria's Voice Foundation to drive meaningful change in the fight against the opioid epidemic—locally, statewide, and nationally.

A milestone moment occurred at the SCSO as Florida Governor Ron DeSantis signed legislation officially establishing **June 6 as Revive Awareness Day**, now recognized as **Victoria's Day** in the State of Florida. The law, championed by the SCSO and the Victoria's Voice Foundation, serves as a lasting tribute to lives lost and a call to action for prevention and recovery.

In Washington, D.C., Sheriff Dennis Lemma stood alongside the Siegel family—the Victoria's Voice Foundation founders—and U.S. Senator Rick Scott to recognize **National Naloxone Awareness Day**, furthering our commitment to increasing access to lifesaving interventions nationwide.

Back in Seminole County, Chief of Staff Bryan Beyer spoke at the Florida Department of Health to commemorate the **first annual Revive Awareness Day event**, reaffirming our agency's role in leading community education and awareness efforts.

These moments reflect more than recognition—they mark a movement. Together with the Victoria's Voice Foundation, we remain dedicated to saving lives and supporting families through advocacy, outreach, and hope.





# Sheriff Lemma Named 2024 Leadership Legend

## Honoring a Commitment to **Community Leadership**

Sheriff Lemma was honored with the 2024 Leadership Legend Award by Leadership Seminole, recognizing his exemplary service and dedication. Despite receiving such a prestigious accolade, Sheriff Lemma remains humble and expresses gratitude for the recognition. His leadership and commitment to the community, particularly in addressing opioid use disorder on a national level, have been widely acknowledged.

Former Sheriff Don Eslinger, a past recipient of this award, commended Sheriff Lemma for his deserving recognition. Eslinger emphasized Lemma's integrity, vision, and unwavering dedication to public service, affirming his rightful place among the esteemed leaders of Seminole County. This award highlights Sheriff Lemma's significant impact in creating a safe and thriving community and his efforts to combat the opioid crisis, marking a proud moment in his career and for those he has diligently served.







# Reflecting on the Remarkable Career of Undersheriff Lou Tomeo

After **35 years of distinguished service**, Undersheriff Lou Tomeo announced his retirement from the Seminole County Sheriff's Office. His career began in 1990 with the Altamonte Springs Police Department, where he served on the Ready Response Team and worked as a CCIB agent. He joined SCSO in 1996, continuing his investigative work before being promoted to sergeant in 1999.

Throughout his career, Undersheriff Tomeo held key leadership roles in patrol, crisis intervention, child protective services, domestic security, and law enforcement operations. He rose through the ranks, becoming Captain in 2014, Chief in 2016, and Undersheriff in 2017, providing oversight in law enforcement, corrections, and investigations.

Beyond his duties, he actively participated in the International Association of Chiefs of Police (IACP), the Central Florida Criminal Justice Association, and Leadership Seminole. His contributions to law enforcement and the community have left a lasting impact.

Undersheriff Tomeo's retirement is bittersweet, as he has consistently embodied honor, pride, and professionalism throughout his service. We celebrate his remarkable impact on our agency and the legacy he leaves behind.



# Undersheriff **Ron Hopper**

## Second-in-command

In June 2024, Captain Ron Hopper was promoted to Undersheriff, serving as the second-in-command at the SCSO.

Undersheriff Hopper brings over 31 years of policing experience to his new position. From 1993 to 1998, he served as a deputy sheriff and an undercover detective at the Hernando County Sheriff's Office, where he began his respectable criminal justice career. In 1998, he took a role with the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI), where he served as a Special Agent in the New Orleans Division from 1998 to 2002, the Supervisory Special Agent – Domestic Terrorism Operations Unit from 2002 to 2004, the Unit Chief – Domestic Terrorism Operations Unit from 2004 to 2006, the Supervisory Special Agent – Brevard Resident Agency and Orlando Joint Terrorism Task Force from 2006 to 2008, the Supervisory Special Agent – Tampa Division Orlando Resident Agency Criminal Squad from 2008 to 2015, and as the Assistant Special Agent in Charge – Tampa Division Orlando Resident Agency from 2015 until he retired from the federal system in 2021 after 23 years of service.







— #WeAreSCSO —







# Seminole Neighborhood Policing (SNP)

The SNP Division plays a crucial role in maintaining public safety and fostering a sense of security within the community. While their responsibilities encompass a wide range of tasks, including uniformed patrol activities, general investigations, code enforcement, community partnerships, and crime prevention initiatives, a significant focus is placed on engaging with the community through various programs. These community-focused efforts are designed to build trust, promote cooperation, and enhance the quality of life for all residents.

In 2024, Code Enforcement proactively identified 469 areas for improvement. Through the SARA (Scanning, Analysis, Response, and Assessment) Problem Solving Initiative, 40 community challenges were effectively addressed. These efforts demonstrate the Division's comprehensive strategy for enhancing public safety, fostering community partnerships, and promoting the well-being of Seminole County residents. Additionally, proactive traffic enforcement measures were implemented to ensure safer roadways for all.

## Why I Serve

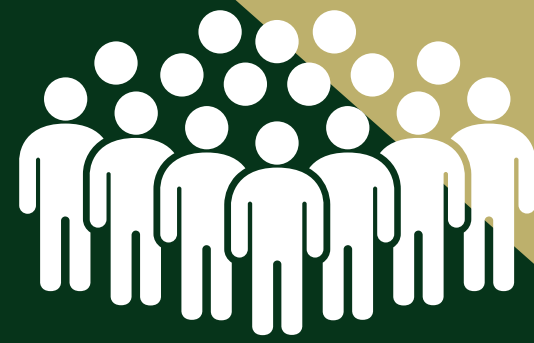


From a young age, I've been driven by a calling to serve and protect. My passion for law enforcement comes from the meaningful connections I've built with both my colleagues and the citizens of Seminole County. Every day, I'm motivated by the opportunity to safeguard others, make a lasting impact, and contribute to the safety and well-being of our community. As a Deputy with the Seminole County Sheriff's Office, I'm honored to fulfill that purpose, working to ensure a safer and stronger community for all.

- Deputy Sheriff Axel Cruz



# Specialized Services



Specialized Services play a crucial role in enhancing community relationships and preventing crime within Seminole County. By engaging in proactive outreach programs and implementing strategic crime prevention initiatives, these services aim to foster trust and collaboration between law enforcement and residents.

- Community events and outreach initiatives: **151**
- Home Security/Business Security Assessments: **144**
- Business Security Assessments: **4**
- Residential Assessments: **5**
- Women's Awareness & Self Defense: **20 classes**
- Snow Patrol: **28 events, 4,902 snow cones**
- Citizens On Patrol: **12,929 hours**
- Chaplains: **3,423 hours**
- Administrative Volunteers: **1,417 hours**
- Reserve Deputies: **2,841 hours**

By focusing on these areas, Specialized Services works to create a safer, more informed community where residents feel supported and empowered to contribute to crime prevention efforts.





# Community Law Enforcement Academy (CLEA)

The Seminole County Sheriff's Office CLEA aims to educate Seminole County residents about law enforcement concepts and procedures.

This engaging 15-week program convenes once a week, starting with an introduction from our command staff. Sessions cover various topics including neighborhood policing, investigations, juvenile services, and forensics. Participants will witness demonstrations from the Special Operations Unit, which includes SWAT, Aviation, Range and Water, K9, and EOD. Additionally, they will have the chance to fire Sheriff's Office weapons at the gun range and experience driving a patrol car under conditions similar to those deputies are trained. Participants will also tour the John E. Polk Correctional Facility, the Juvenile Enforcement Center, and the Criminal Justice Center. Moreover, all students will have the opportunity to join a uniformed deputy sheriff for ride-alongs.

In 2024, we hosted **two** CLEA sessions with a total of **41** participants





# Outreach & Neighborhood Engagement

The Seminole County Sheriff's Office "ONE" (Outreach & Neighborhood Engagement) Initiative is an exciting program that offers a ten-hour interactive experience with various units from our agency. You will have the opportunity to meet Sheriff Dennis Lemma, members of the command staff and members from our specialty units, along with a formal graduation ceremony at the conclusion of the week.

We implemented two ONE (Outreach and Neighborhood Engagement) initiatives aimed at strengthening community partnerships.

- Oakmonte Village: **32 attendees**
- Lutheran Haven: **55 attendees**

Total attendees: **87**





# Holiday Season

## Community Giving

During the holiday season, our agency members displayed remarkable generosity and commitment to giving back to the community. They organized toy drives, ensuring that children in need received delightful gifts that brought smiles to their faces. Additionally, they took the time to visit local seniors, sharing warmth and companionship that brightened their spirits. These heartfelt efforts not only fostered a spirit of togetherness and compassion but also positively impacted the lives of many individuals and families in our community, reinforcing the true meaning of the holiday season.





# Recruitment - More than just a Job

At the SCSO, we offer more than just a job; we provide an opportunity to engage in a vital mission that emphasizes the highest levels of the policing profession, integrity, and respect for all. Whether you are an experienced criminal justice professional or beginning your career in this field, we welcome those who are committed to serving others with honor and integrity.

Our steadfast commitment to community engagement and a high level of organizational sophistication distinguishes us. We cultivate an environment that values collaboration, respect, and a diverse workforce that reflects the community we are entrusted to serve. We uphold the highest standards of the policing profession while fostering meaningful relationships within our community. By joining our team, you will play a crucial role in building and maintaining these connections and ensuring the safety and security of all residents.







As part of our efforts to recruit diverse, qualified candidates who reflect the community we serve, the SCSO hosted a recruitment and hiring event at the Ana G. Mendez University on the island of Puerto Rico in April. With an increasing demand for skilled deputies, it was essential to implement strategies that enhance recruitment efforts and foster inclusivity within the SCSO.



# Professional Development

In 2021, the Professional Development Division was created along with the Training and Career Development Sections. In 2024, the Professional Development Division expanded again with its development of the Seminole County Law Enforcement and Corrections Academy.

The mission of the Professional Development Division is to enhance and support the professional growth of our staff by providing career development, leadership learning, advanced training, and upskilling opportunities to promote expertise within our agency

During 2024, Professional Development:

- hosted 482 courses (excluding grappling) with over 4,100 participants.
- conducted 30 Active Threat classes, ATF Ghost Gun, and Autism awareness.
- trained 23 new deputy trainees and 65 detention deputy trainees
- launched the first Corrections Academy.





# Seminole County Law Enforcement and Corrections Academy



In August 2024, the Seminole County Sheriff's Office achieved a significant milestone by receiving approval and certification from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement Criminal Justice Standards and Training Commission (FDLE CJSTC) to establish the Seminole County Law Enforcement and Corrections Academy. This newly formed program comprises both sworn law enforcement and certified corrections academies, designed to enhance the quality and effectiveness of training for future deputies, detention deputies, and officers.

The academy hosted its inaugural Corrections Academy in September 2024, marking a successful beginning with 14 graduates. Impressively, each graduate passed the state exam on their first attempt, underscoring the academy's commitment to excellence in training and education. This accomplishment reflects the dedication and hard work of both the instructors and students, setting a high standard for future classes and contributing positively to the county's law enforcement and corrections capabilities.

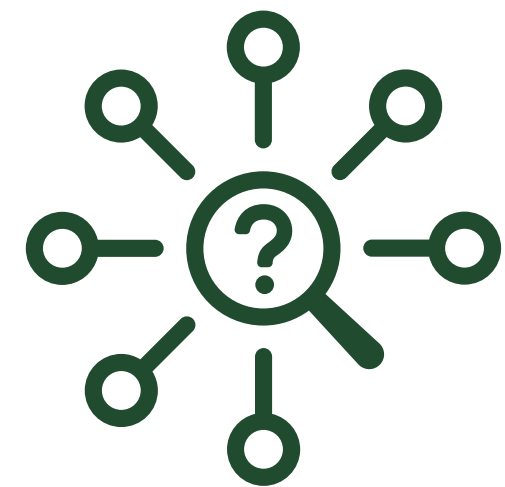




# The Criminal **Investigations** Division

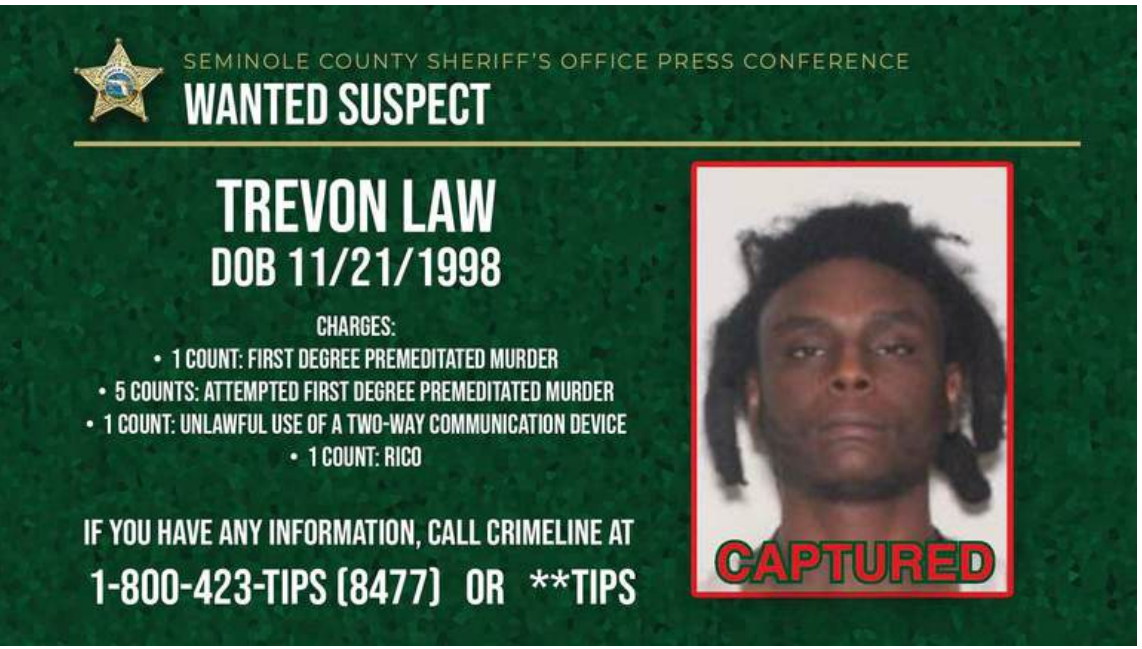
The Criminal Investigations Division is comprised of specialized sections and units that handle complex crimes. Their expertise ensures thorough investigation of diverse cases requiring focused analysis and techniques.

- **Major Crimes Unit (MCU)** is responsible for conducting criminal investigations into homicides, sexual batteries, armed robberies (which include banks and other businesses), all crimes involving the use of a firearm, and other significant crimes. In 2024, the MCU was assigned 187 cases, which included five homicides, 66 deaths (other than homicide), 12 robbery, and 22 sexual batteries.
- **Digital Forensics Unit (DFU)** of the Seminole County Sheriff's Office continues to support investigations for Seminole County, its cities, neighboring jurisdictions, and federal partners. In 2024, DFU assisted 30 agencies, handled 412 cases, and processed 1,047 evidence items.. The total data size amounted to 666.08 TB.
- **Seminole Financial Crimes Task Force (SFCTF)** investigates crimes that have a financial impact on our community. We also work to educate citizens to prevent victimization through frauds and scams. The SFCTF is a multi-agency task force including local police department investigators. In 2024, the unit was assigned 1,195 cases.
- Our **Victim Services Unit** is the only law enforcement agency in the county providing on scene advocacy to crime victims 24 hours a day, every day of the year; we provide this service for our agency as well as to all seven city police departments within Seminole County, Sanford Airport Police and for Florida Highway Patrol. In 2024, the Unit provided advocacy on 6,715 cases.





# Major Crimes Unit's Diligent Investigation Leads to 14 Arrests in Fatal Drive-By Shooting



In February, 2024, Sheriff Lemma announced the arrest of 13 individuals connected to a January 2023 drive-by shooting in Sanford, that resulted in one death and five injuries.

The investigation began on January 16, 2023, deputies observed gunfire from a dark-colored sedan targeting a Mercedes-Benz Sprinter van near County Road 46A and Rinehart Road. The van's occupants, six women returning from a concert, were struck; 31-year-old Princess Tolliver of Tallahassee succumbed to her injuries, while the others were treated and released.

Investigations revealed that the assailants, affiliated with the "On Top Forever" (OTF) gang—a subset of the national Gangster Murder Crips—mistakenly believed a performer from the concert was in the van. The 11 male suspects face charges including murder, attempted murder, and racketeering. Two female suspects were also charged with related offenses. The arrests were made with assistance from the U.S. Marshals Service, Orlando Police Department, Orange County Sheriff's Office, and FBI Safe Streets. Sheriff Lemma emphasized the agency's commitment to justice and community safety, extending condolences to Tolliver's family.

In April, the 14th and last suspect was apprehended, finally granting closure and peace to the victims and their families after their long and painful journey.



# Family Investigative Services Section

## Protecting Our Vulnerable Populations



- **Crimes Against Children Unit** was assigned 229 cases, with a 52% clearance rate. In addition, they conducted four traveler operations resulting in 28 arrests, and reviewed 311 Cybertips.
- **Youth Investigative Services Unit** made 271 arrests, investigated 246 missing juveniles (voluntary, disabled, and endangered runaways) cases, and monitored 369 juveniles placed on GPS EMPACT.
- **Domestic Violence Unit** reviewed 972 domestic cases, conducted 200 investigations, made 95 arrests, and conducted 14 trainings and presentations.
- **The Elder Services Unit** was assigned 174 cases and made contact or provided services and resources to 316 citizens. They also attended or presented 78 times at HOAs and various elder functions.



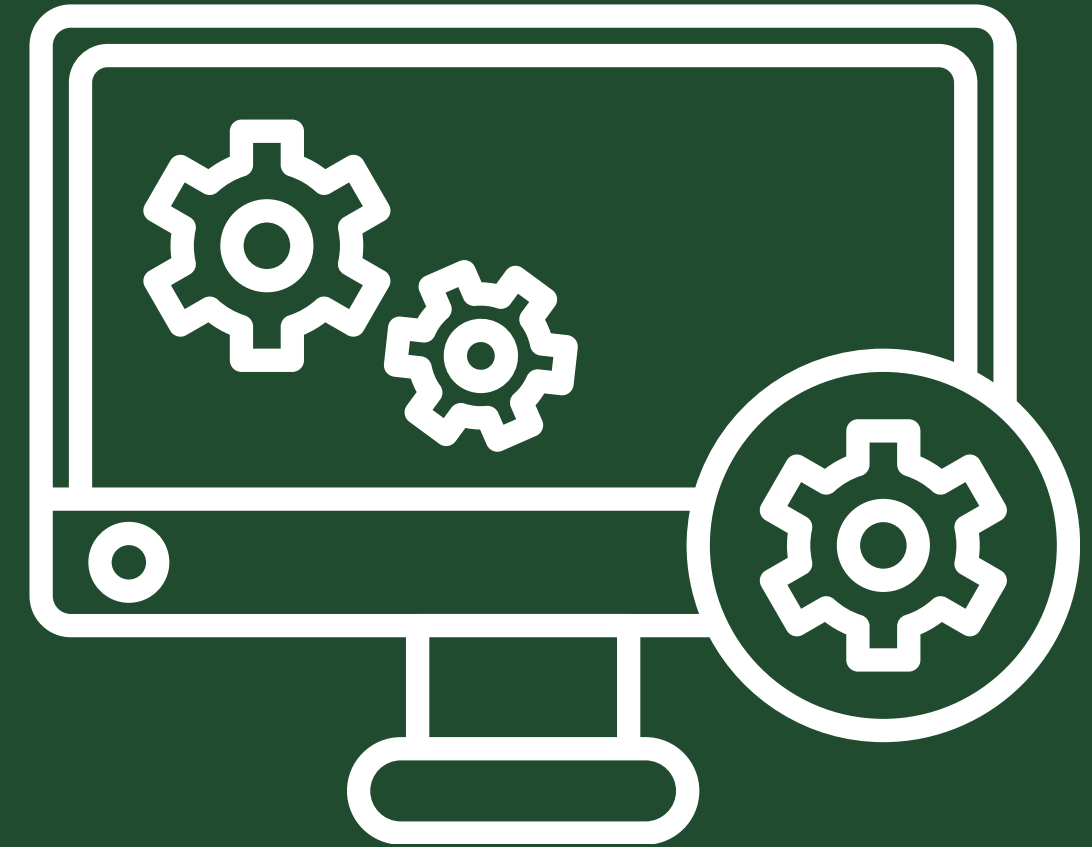
# Domestic Security Division Investigates Swatting Incident at Florida Mosque:

## Inter-Agency Collaboration Leads to the Arrest of California Teen

In May 2023, a serious swatting incident occurred at the Masjid Al Hayy Mosque in Sanford. A fake emergency call warned of a mass shooting, mentioning Satanism. The caller also stated he had handgun and explosive devices, and played audio of simulated gunfire, causing a large law enforcement response. This false alarm highlighted the risks of fake emergency reports.

The SCSO **Domestic Security Division** led an extensive investigation with the Department of Justice and FBI, tracing the crime to 17-year-old Alan Winston Filion from Lancaster, California. Detectives linked multiple swatting service accounts to Filion's IP address. A search of his home in July provided crucial evidence.

On January 18, 2024, Filion was arrested with help from the Los Angeles County Sheriff's Department and detained at Los Padrinos Juvenile Hall before being extradited to Seminole County to face multiple felony charges. Investigators believe that Filion may also be connected to other swatting incidents across the United States. This case emphasizes the vital role of inter-agency cooperation in tackling digital threats.







# City-County Investigative Bureau's Operation Leads to Major Drug Trafficking Bust



In April, our City-County Investigative Bureau (CCIB) conducted an investigation called “Operation Black Ice,” targeting drug trafficking activities in and around Seminole County. The **six-month investigation**, which began in October 2023, revealed a large-scale drug and weapons trafficking organization.

During the extensive investigation, CCIB agents uncovered a sophisticated operation responsible for distributing a range of illicit substances including Fentanyl, Heroin, Xylazine, Methamphetamine, Cocaine, Crack Cocaine, and N-dimethylpentylone (MDPV or "Molly"). The group was also engaged in smuggling marijuana into Florida from other states and allegedly conspiring to commit murder. They also sold high-powered firearms including three machine guns, 11 rifles, and nine handguns.

The investigation, conducted in multiple phases, involved undercover agents making controlled purchases of drugs and firearms from Aikens and his associates. Due to the magnitude of Fentanyl sales, the Sheriff's Office secured funding from the Florida Department of Law Enforcement's SAFE Program (State Assistance for Fentanyl Eradication).

Key findings from the investigation include:

- 24 undercover purchases totaling **over \$160,000**, including significant quantities of Fentanyl (four pounds), Heroin (three pounds), Methamphetamine (five pounds), Molly (four and a half pounds), Xylazine (14 grams), marijuana (200 grams) and ten firearms.
- **Seizure of 18.5 kilograms** (over 40 pounds) of cocaine and **13 additional firearms** from a residence associated with the investigation.
- Prevention of a potential murder-for-hire plot against an inmate through collaboration with prison officials, and the interception of a drone operation aimed at smuggling contraband into a correctional facility, resulting in the arrest of two individuals in Jackson County, Florida.





# Behavioral Services Unit (BSU)

## Adopting Proactive and Lasting Mental Health Solutions

The Behavioral Services Unit is at the forefront of improving law enforcement strategies for addressing mental health and crisis-related calls. Committed to understanding and tackling the fundamental issues at the heart of these crises, the Unit provides vital assistance to those in need.

Adopting this proactive approach, the Unit not only focuses on resolving immediate crises but also strives to implement enduring solutions that foster well-being and recovery. By addressing the key factors contributing to mental health crises, BSU plays an essential role in ensuring individuals have access to the necessary resources for enhancing their well-being.

In 2024, BSU saw a **17% decrease** in adults who had 3 or more crisis related calls, compared to 2023, and a **22% decrease** in adult Marchman Acts. They also expanded their educational offerings and provided training to roughly 250 law enforcement members and 1,795 community members in 2024.







- 273 Employees
- 62 Academy Recruits



**146**  
Patrol K-9  
Deployments



**22**  
SWAT  
Callouts



**38,786**  
Volunteered Hours





# Specialized Response Section

The Seminole County Specialized Response Section is made up of ten teams. SWAT, Crisis Negotiation Team, Hazardous Device Team, Emergency Response Team, Critical Incident Response Team, Food Unit, Honor Guard, Unmanned Aircraft Systems, Underwater Search and Recovery, and the Civilian Search & Rescue Team. These are collateral duty assignments made up of sworn, certified and civilians, from multiple agencies within Seminole County. While deployed, most of these teams work under the direction of the High Risk Incident Commander

In 2024, significant activities included the SWAT Team's 22 deployments, Crisis Negotiation Team's response to 12 calls, the Hazardous Device Team's 20 missions, and the Critical Incident Response Team attendance at 21 events across Seminole County. The Emergency Response Team assisted in 27 missions. Additionally, the Food Unit served 11,210 meals, the UAS Team received three requests, the USART deployed 35 times, and the Civilian Search and Rescue Team, a team of 16 volunteers, assisted with five deployments.





# Special Operations



## Aviation Section

The Aviation Section supported 30 agencies across 1,228 calls, providing the most support to the SCSO with 831 calls. Key achievements include 146 arrests, the successful location of 137 targets using an infrared camera, the recovery of 22 stolen vehicles, and assistance in 53 missing person cases. Extensive training programs included pilot recurrent training, maintenance, safety, and special operations. Additionally, ALERT underwent re-accreditation by the Airborne Public Safety Accreditation Commission.



## Range and Water Unit

Range and Water Unit conducted 119 marine area patrols on waterways in Seminole County. Additionally, for the year 2024, the Range and Water Unit conducted 22 area patrols on Seminole County designated Natural Lands and State Wildlife Management and Water Management properties. Additionally, they deployed twice to Dixie County to assist during disaster recovery from Hurricanes Debby and Milton.

## Canine Unit

Deputy Welch completed training with his new canine partner, "Yogi." Yogi is now a certified full-service canine and is also drug certified. Three canine deputies attended the HITs conference in Louisiana. The HITs conference presents the most up-to-date legal briefs and training to canine deputies. The Canine Unit supported multiple community events and demonstrations ranging from the Community Law Enforcement Academy, Leadership Seminole, new employee orientation and Seminole County School demonstrations.





# Storm Response 2024

## Hurricane Debby

In August, our Deputies returned from a six-day deployment to Dixie County, where they provided 24/7 law enforcement services to support Sheriff Darby Butler and the Dixie County Sheriff's Office in their recovery efforts. Our deputies conducted continuous patrols, distributed essential supplies, and assisted in road clearing operations, while our support staff maintained a fully operational, self-sustaining base camp. Hurricane Debby, which rapidly intensified from a tropical storm to a hurricane, made landfall in the Big Bend region with winds approaching 100 mph.

This storm serves as an important reminder for all our residents to prepare well in advance. For more information on how to make a disaster plan and sign up for emergency alerts through Prepare Seminole, click [here](#).





## Hurricane Helene

Nearly six weeks after Hurricane Debby, our Deputies once again deployed to Dixie County after Hurricane Helene severely impacted the area, with over 90% of the county losing power and causing catastrophic damage to its coastal communities.

In addition to conducting patrols and helping to clear debris our Deputies also provided security for visiting officials, including Governor Ron DeSantis, Speaker of the U.S. House of Representatives Mike Johnson, and President Joe Biden.

We were overwhelmed by the gratitude and gestures of support from the residents of Dixie County, which has truly reinforced the resilience and unity of this community.





# Rendering Honors

The Honor Guard Team represents the Sheriff's Office at ceremonial events and services, including funerals, parades, and other formal proceedings. The 2024 Honor Guard Team consisted of **three** squads, each playing a pivotal role in addressing attendance and participation challenges from prior years. We ended the year with **20** members on the roster, including the addition of **four** new members.

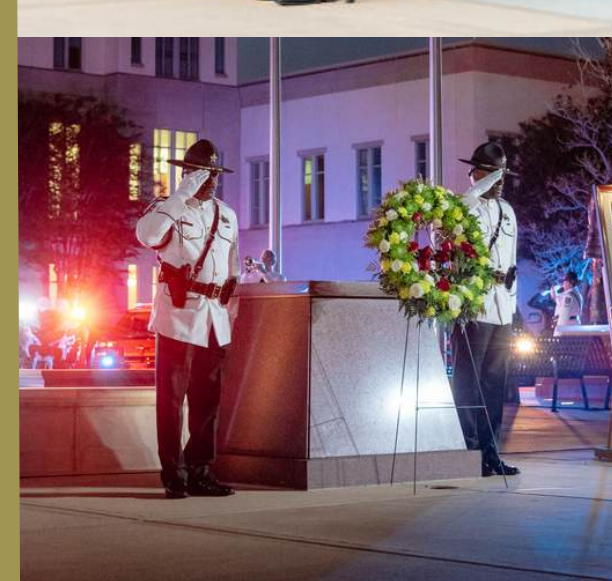
The Honor Guard participated in **60** details in 2024. These included:

- **40 Color Guard requests**
- **9 Funerals/Line of Duty Death (LODD) services**
- **7 Memorial Services**
- **4 Parades**

Additionally, we had the first member to receive the distinguished Honor Guard Member of the Year award in their rookie year. Deputy Lumaris Santiago has exemplified dedication and excellence from day one. Leading the team with 21 ceremonial details this year, she consistently demonstrated exceptional commitment, reliability, and a positive attitude that inspires us all.







# Honoring Seminole County's **Fallen Heroes**

In May, the SCSO hosted its annual Memorial Ceremony to pay tribute to six fallen heroes from the SCSO, alongside those from the Longwood Police Department, Florida Highway Patrol, and Officer German of the Windermere Police Department, who hailed from Seminole County. Sheriff Lemma shared heartfelt remarks, while Chaplain Eugene Gregory Jr. delivered a poignant keynote speech. The event featured a touching candlelight vigil that united the community in expressing support and gratitude for the courageous individuals who made the ultimate sacrifice. This ceremony serves as a vital reminder of the sacrifices made by law enforcement officers and their families, offering a moment for reflection and appreciation.

Click [here](#) to watch the ceremony video.





# A Lasting Tribute to our Heroes



As of December 2024, the SCSO accomplished the dedication of roadway memorials for each of our six fallen deputy sheriffs. These tributes stand as enduring reminders of the sacrifices made by these heroes and as symbols of our community's deep gratitude.

The process of dedicating roadways for our six fallen deputy sheriffs started as far back as the 1990s when the Seminole County Board of Commissioners approved the road name change of County Road 46A honoring Deputy Sheriff Hugh E. Thomas, Jr. in 1998 to HE Thomas Jr. Parkway. In 2018, a portion of State Road 414/Maitland Boulevard was designated as Deputy Matt Miller Memorial Boulevard. In 2023, the Florida Legislature designated a portion of State Road 46 as Deputy Sheriff Eugene "Stetson" Gregory Memorial Highway. Last year, the Florida Legislature designated portions of State Road 419 in Chuluota, Highway 17-92 in Sanford, and State Road 434 in Longwood to honor Deputy Sheriff Cleveland Jacobs, Deputy Sheriff Robert O. Moore, and Deputy Sheriff George Pfeil, respectively.





# Eternally in Our Hearts - A Farewell to a Lasting Legacy

On December 13th, the entire SCSO mourned the loss of another agency pillar, SCSO Chaplain Eugene Gregory Jr., known to us as Gene. Gene, the son of fallen SCSO Deputy Sheriff Eugene Gregory, has been a steadfast and compassionate presence within our agency for over two decades.

Gene began his service as a chaplain with the SCSO following the tragic death of his father in the line of duty. From that moment on, Gene became an integral part of our SCSO family, offering guidance, comfort, and strength to countless members through both personal and professional challenges. His unwavering faith, commitment to family, and deep sense of community were the hallmarks of his service, and he truly lived out the values that define our agency. Gene's dedication to our agency extended beyond his role as chaplain. His legacy of service and commitment to our agency and to our community will never be forgotten.





# Tribute to Sergeant Ken Burnham



It is with great sorrow that we announced the passing of Sergeant Ken Burnham, a valued member of the agency, who succumbed to cancer in October, 2024.

Ken began his law enforcement career in 1996 at the Seminole Community College Corrections Academy, later obtaining law enforcement certification at Valencia Community College. He served as a Corrections Officer with the Florida Department of Corrections and Orange County Corrections before joining the Oviedo Police Department in 1999. In December 2000, Ken joined SCSO, advancing to Sergeant in 2005, where he excelled in Security, Intake/Release, and Inmate Programs.

In 2022, Ken transitioned to Professional Development as a Corrections Field Training Sergeant, eagerly anticipating the startup of the Seminole County Law Enforcement & Corrections Academy.

Ken was a leader, problem solver, and role model, leaving a lasting legacy within our organization. His dedication and leadership will be deeply missed.



# John E. Polk Correctional Facility

The John E. Polk Correctional Facility (JEPCF) booked 10,272 inmates into the facility in 2024, with an average daily population of 959.

The JEPCF is committed to fostering a supportive environment for individuals transitioning back into society. Our Re-entry Programming aims to equip inmates with the skills and resources necessary for a smooth transition post-release. The primary goals include reducing recidivism, improving employment security, and fostering personal development. The ReNEW/ACTT empowerment reentry programs is a self-contained program designed to focus on promising practices and evidence-based substance use and abuse curriculum combined with classes focused on developing pro-social skills, self-awareness, emotional regulation, art, health and wellness, and thinking responsibly. During 2024, the program had 196 participants.

The JEPCF Re-entry Programming and Substance Use Treatment Initiatives continue to make a positive impact, contributing to safer communities and brighter futures for those we serve.



I began serving in Corrections 21 years ago to help make a positive impact on individuals who are often at their most vulnerable, helping them find a path to rehabilitation. By maintaining safety and order, my role enables me to support both the individuals in custody and the community by promoting accountability and encouraging personal growth.

*-Detention Deputy  
Angela Hunsinger*





# Probation

The mission of our Probation Division is to oversee all offenders assigned probation by the Seminole County Courts. This includes enforcing court-mandated sanctions, such as attending classes for petty theft, DUI, domestic violence battery, and substance abuse, as well as collecting fines and court costs. During 2024, the Unit saw 991 new cases of adults who enter probation for misdemeanor charges.

Furthermore, the division is responsible for administering drug and alcohol tests and performing residential searches. Additionally, probation offers alternatives to traditional criminal justice processes. For example:

- ✓ Pre-Trial Diversion offers a speedy trial waiver to the offender that diverts selected first-time offenders from entering into the criminal justice. In 2024, Pre-Trial Diversion case increased significantly to 429 in 2024, compared to 246 in 2023.
- ✓ The Mental Health Court and Veterans Treatment Court initiatives exemplify our dedication to rehabilitation. By partnering with mental health experts and veterans' services, Probation Officers offer personalized support and resources. This approach helps individuals dealing with mental health disorders or veterans grappling with substance abuse to obtain essential assistance and steer clear of incarceration. These specialty courts supervised 48 cases in 2024.





# Judicial Services:

## Enhancing Justice in Modern Legal Systems

The Judicial Security Division, comprising of Judicial Security and the Civil Section, ensures comprehensive judicial security across six buildings and a parking garage. Its duties include overseeing Criminal, Civil, Juvenile, Domestic Relations, and specialty courts, while ensuring safety for all involved in these proceedings. In March 2024, several judicial stakeholders relocated to the newly added Justice James E.C. Perry Annex, with the grand opening held on April 5, 2024. The Judicial Security Dispatch also advanced into a modernized CCTV Room within the Annex.

Their unwavering dedication paid off in 2024, leading to remarkable achievements. The following data reflects their hard work with impressive and significant results:

- Visitors to all five buildings: **363,283**
- Personal items screened at entrances: **338,455**
- Contraband items found at screening: **1,706**
- Inmates transported to courtrooms: **4,781**
- Warrant arrests made: **145**
- Tasks handled by CCTV Dispatcher: **15,586**
- Defendants attending Specialty Courts: **917**





# Safe Exchange Zones

In January 2024, the SCSO introduced designated locations for co-parents to conduct safe custody exchanges of their children. The parking spaces are marked by "Safe Exchange Zone" signs, video recorded 24 hours a day, and are located in front of our main and region office buildings at:

## Main Office

- 100 Eslinger Way, Sanford, FL 32773

## East Region Office (Oviedo/Geneva/Casselberry/Winter Springs)

- 1225 East Broadway, Oviedo, FL 32765

## South Region Office (Altamonte Springs)

- 120 West Pineview Street, Altamonte Springs, FL 32714

## North Region Office (Longwood/Lake Mary/Sanford)

- 805 Primera Blvd., Lake Mary, FL 32746

We are proud to support families and provide a secure environment for these important moments. The constant surveillance ensures that any incidents can be reviewed and addressed promptly, offering peace of mind to families while maintaining a safe space for everyone involved.





# Department of School Safety & Security

## School Resource Deputies

As part of our ongoing commitment to school safety and security, a full-time School Resource Deputy/Officer has been assigned to each public school campus since the 2016-2017 school year. The School Safety Division was expanded to the Department of School Safety & Security in the 2023-2024 school year to assist with the ever-growing demands of school safety and security coupled with legislative mandates.

The School Resource Deputy program includes 49 full-time School Resource Deputy Sheriffs (SRDs). The Department of School Safety & Security is also responsible for the 39 school resource officers (SROs) who handle the school safety and security function in most of our cities throughout Seminole County. Altamonte Springs Police Department (5), Casselberry Police Department (1), Lake Mary Police Department (4), Longwood Police Department (3), Oviedo Police Department (9), and Sanford Police Department (13) participate in the responsibility of keeping our most vulnerable resources safe.

There were **2,247** reports created for the 2023-2024 school year, spanning from August 1, 2023, to May 31, 2024. This represents a **6% decrease** in reports from the previous school year to this school year. These reports range from simple contacts to physical arrests and can document incidents both on and off campus.

Families in Seminole County should feel at peace with the safety and security of their students and loved ones while on campus.







# School Safety Comfort

## K-9s - Meet Bella

In the past year, our School Safety Comfort K-9 program has made significant strides in promoting a safe and supportive educational environment. At the heart of this initiative is Bella, our dedicated comfort K-9, who has become an integral part of our school community. Bella's gentle presence helps alleviate anxiety and stress, fostering a sense of security among students and staff. Trained to respond to emotional cues, Bella has participated in numerous school events, offering companionship and comfort. Feedback from students and educators highlights a noticeable improvement in overall morale and mental well-being. By bridging the gap between emotional support and safety, Bella exemplifies our commitment to nurturing a positive and inclusive school culture.



# School Crossing Guards

The School Crossing Guard (SCG) Program is certified by the Florida Department of Transportation (FDOT) and mandates annual re-certification for all part-time guards. This certification includes two days of classroom instruction and practical training, culminating in a final assessment at a school post to confirm proficiency. Beyond ensuring the safe arrival and departure of students, our guards also offer various educational safety initiatives, such as Carl's Safety Program and Head Gear Hero.

Currently, there are **192 crossing posts** staffed by **117 school crossing guards**. Any vacancies are filled by SCG substitutes, SCG Coordinators, the SCG Supervisor, SCSO Community Officers, School Resource Deputies/Officers, or on-duty Deputies/Officers. We facilitate over **4,000 crossings each day**. Our School Crossing Guards unite as a team to help students cross the street safely while teaching and reinforcing the significance of safety during their daily journeys to and from school. Additionally, our Crossing Guards are vigilant in reporting any suspicious activities when necessary.





# Juvenile Justice Division

## Youth Intervention Services Unit (YIS)

The Seminole County Sheriff's Office (SCSO) works with youth ages 6-17 at risk for becoming involved with law enforcement. These youth are identified with behavioral, mental health, or legal issues through our community partners and SCSO staff. In 2024, **1,345 youth** were referred to these programs, averaging **112 YIS referrals per month**. The number of YIS referrals **increased 26%** from 2023 to 2024.

## Wraparound Services



Family Services Advocates (FSAs) with our wraparound program play a vital role in supporting youth, families, and vulnerable adults by identifying systemic barriers and providing necessary resources to prevent Department of Children and Families (DCF) intervention. Their educational initiatives cover pool, sleep, and firearm safety, as well as scam and fraud awareness. Collaborating with the Elder Crimes Unit of the Seminole County Sheriff's Office, FSAs ensure that vulnerable adults receive essential items and tools.

In August 2024, the Wraparound team partnered with Second Harvest Food Bank of Central Florida, successfully **feeding over 520 individuals** from 117 families with more than **2,700 pounds of food**, diapers, and formula. Fresh produce is emphasized for promoting healthy lifestyles. Additionally, a partnership with the American Heart Association was established.

### 2024 FWS REFERRALS

The FWS program received **558** referrals from January through December of 2024. In the first quarter of 2024, the FWS program received 161 referrals for assistance. In the second quarter of 2024, the program received 153 referrals. Quarter three saw 120 referrals. Quarter four saw 122 referrals for the unit. Monthly referrals are plotted below. On average, 47 families were referred to the FWS program each month.





# Youth Explorer Program



Last year the Explorers completed approximately 3,100 hours of community service compared to last year's total of 2,250 hours of community service. There were 26 youth deputies who participate on our Explorers team throughout the year. The Explorers performed 47 community service events, 495 hours in Teen Court, and 8 Honor Guard events. The Explorers accumulated 6,667 hours of law enforcement training and completed 559 hours on ride-alongs.



# Forensic Services Division

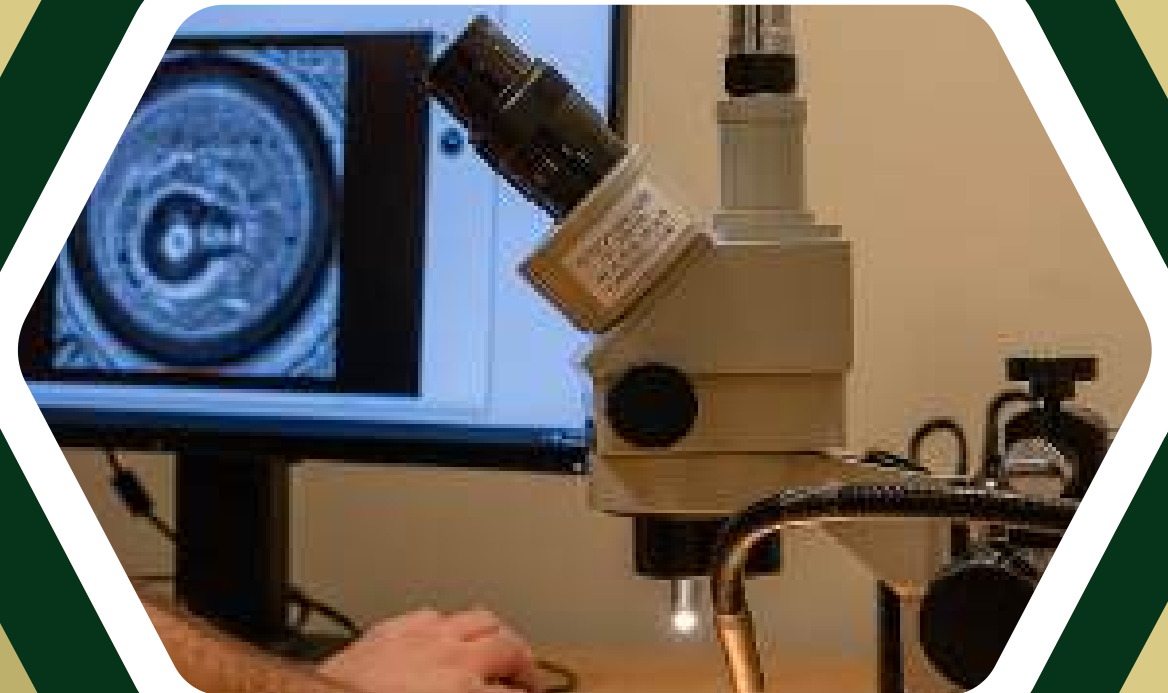
Our Forensic Laboratory Services Division is committed to supporting our agency's mission by providing accurate, scientific, and professional forensic services. Central to their mission is a dedication to precision, integrity, and excellence in all aspects of their work. They maintain the highest standards of forensic analysis, using cutting-edge technologies and methods to ensure dependable results.

As a reliable partner to neighboring law enforcement agencies, this Division offers essential support in criminal investigations and prosecutions. By delivering thorough forensic services—such as evidence analysis, crime scene processing, and expert testimony—they play a vital role in pursuing justice and enhancing community safety.

Some highlights from 2024 include the **Latent Print Unit**, which successfully examined **3,858 latent prints** across all seven municipalities, showcasing their meticulous attention to detail and dedication to justice.

In the **Evidence Unit**, the year-end total of property and evidence within our custody reached **116,819**, reflecting the unit's effective management and organizational skills.

The **Crime Scene Unit** demonstrated their expertise by responding to **164 primary scenes** and assisting other agencies **12** times last year, underscoring their commitment to collaborative law enforcement efforts.





# 9-1-1 Communication Center



The SCSO Communications Division serves as a vital link between the public and emergency services, ensuring efficient dispatch services across the seven municipalities within Seminole County. These include the Altamonte Springs, Casselberry, Lake Mary, Longwood, Oviedo, Sanford, and Winter Springs Police Departments.

In 2024, the Communications Center managed an **impressive 605,280** calls. Among these, **188,069 were 911** calls, with a remarkable 99% answered within 20 seconds, surpassing the National Emergency Number Association's standard. The center also handled 5,000 text-to-911 messages, enhancing accessibility for those in need.

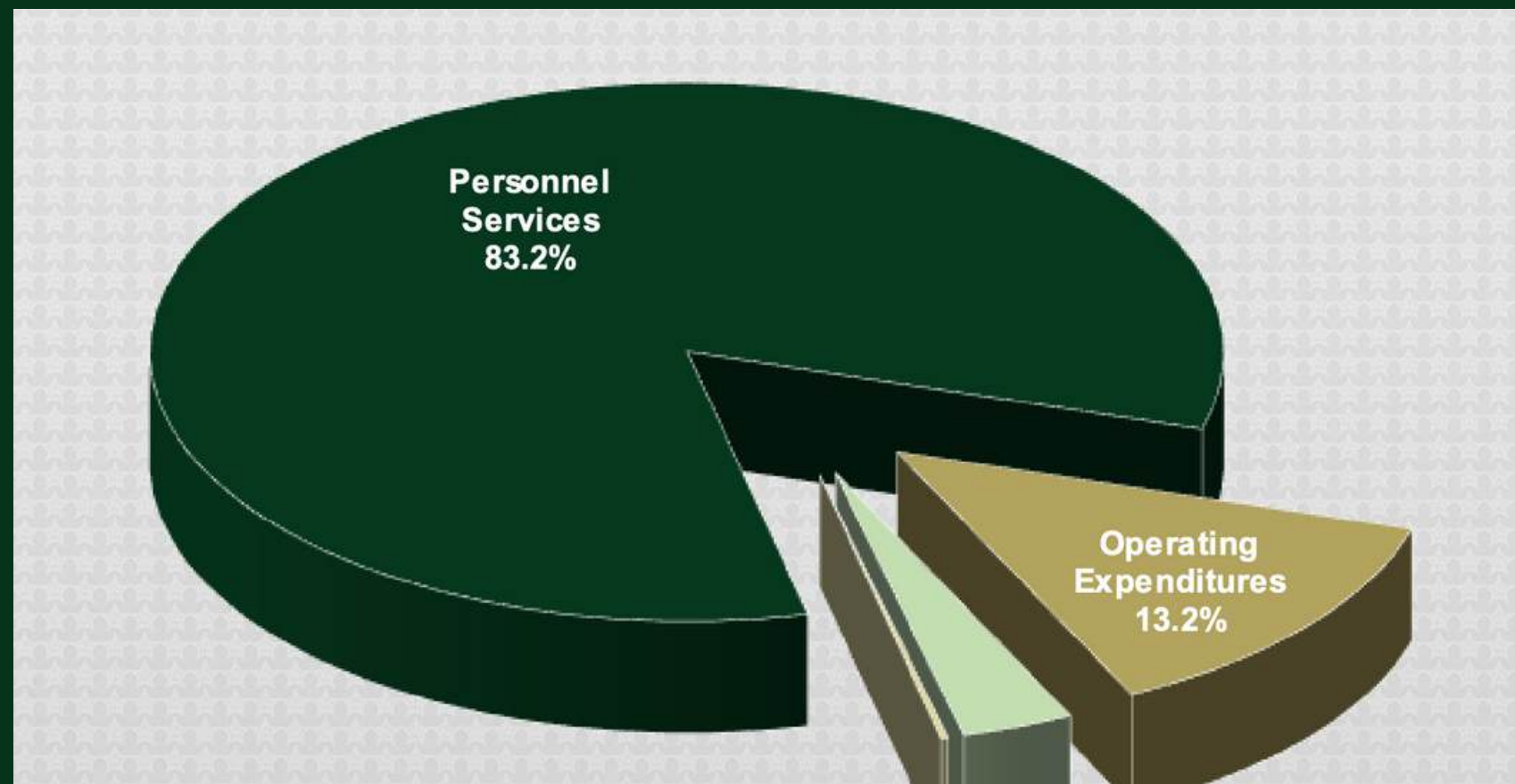
A significant milestone was reached in February 2024 when the Communications Division moved into a newly renovated center. This state-of-the-art facility features **39 new terminals** with built-in heaters, adjustable desks for standing, a quiet room, a renovated break room, a conference room, and ample additional office space, all designed to improve efficiency and comfort for the dedicated team.





# Fiscal Services

The Fiscal Year 2023/2024 Certified Budget proposal for the Sheriff's Office totals \$165,878,000, aimed at covering essential operations such as law enforcement, detention, and court services. Revenue from service agreements, including dispatch and school resource deputies, amounts to \$7,441,800, while contractual revenues of \$4,345,000 are directed to the County's general fund.



Budget priorities:

- **Employee Compensation:** Maintaining competitive salaries to ensure a skilled workforce.
- **Resource Allocation:** Focusing on maintaining service levels and addressing priority needs.
- **Technology and Equipment Renewal:** Systematic updates to reduce downtime and costs.

Budget Allocations:

- **Personnel Services:** Constituting 83.1% of the budget, personnel services reflect a 6.6% increase, including a rise in employer contributions to the Florida Retirement System and compensation adjustments.
- **Operating Expenditures:** Increased costs due to inflation, inmate medical services, and technology.
- **Capital Outlay:** A 3.9% increase due to rising vehicle replacement costs.
- **Contingency Budget:** Adjusted for Hurricane Ian response costs, marking its first increase in 20 years.



## Why I Serve



I joined law enforcement to make a difference. Listening to the needs of the community, I dedicate my time to fulfil these needs; keeping Seminole County a safe felt place. Daily, I make a difference and see the difference by the positive feedback and interactions I provide and receive from my peers and the community

*-Deputy Sheriff Ira Allen*

# Professional Standards Division

## Professional Conduct **Review** Section



The Professional Conduct Review Section is responsible for ensuring that all members of the Sheriff's Office uphold the highest standards of integrity, professionalism, and accountability. This Section investigates allegations of misconduct, policy violations, and unethical behavior. Its goal is to maintain public trust and reinforce a culture of transparency and responsibility within the Sheriff's Office.

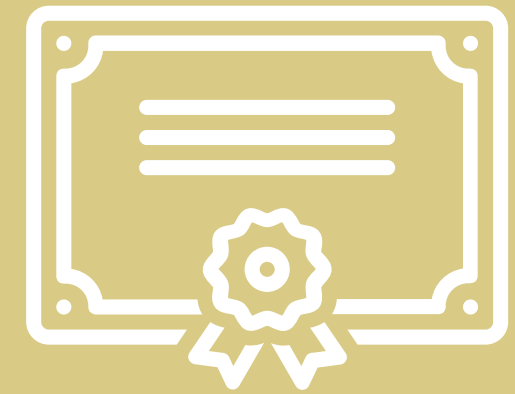
In 2024, this Section received 41 public complaints, one of which resulted in a formal investigation. This is a 15% decrease in complaints from 2023. There are specific procedures for investigating complaints, which are determined by the seriousness of the allegation(s). All complaints are taken seriously and this Section is committed to conducting thorough and impartial investigations to ensure concerns are addressed appropriately.



# Accreditation

The Seminole County Sheriff's Office is currently accredited by nine independent, accrediting bodies:

- American Correctional Association (ACA)
- ANSI National Accreditation Board (ANAB ISO/IEC 17025 Forensic Testing Laboratory Accreditation)
- Commission for Florida Law Enforcement Accreditation (CFA)
- Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA)
- Public Safety Aviation Accreditation Commission (PSAAC)
- Public Safety Communications Accreditation
- Florida Corrections Accreditation Commission (FCAC)
- FCAC for Pretrial and Probation
- National Commission on Correctional Health Care (NCCHC)



Accreditation is a voluntary process that affirms an agency's commitment to the highest standards of professionalism and service. Each accrediting body has set standards that an agency must initially demonstrate compliance with, and then demonstrate continuing adherence to, in order to achieve re-accreditation.

Accreditation standards address key areas such as: organization management and administration, personnel administration, law enforcement operations, training, forensic examination, and inmate and court-related services. Accreditation typically includes an extensive review of an agency's policies, procedures and protocols as well as an on-site inspection and interviews with key personnel. The Sheriff's Office General Orders, which defines policies, the organizational philosophy, and values of the agency, [can be viewed here](#).



# Building Trust through Community Engagement



Our agency is focused on building strong relationships within the community through a range of initiatives. By engaging with residents and giving back, we work to establish trust between the community and law enforcement. For example, we organize donation drives to assist families in need, promote leadership and pride by swearing in Junior Deputies, and distribute snow cones from our Snow Patrol vehicle. These actions underscore our commitment to serving the community. Collectively, these efforts strengthen community bonds and highlight the supportive role of law enforcement, ensuring a safer and more connected neighborhood for everyone.



# SCSO Community Foundation



The Seminole County Sheriff's Office Community Foundation is a non-profit 501(c)(3) organization with a mission to aid underserved and at-risk populations in the county. The foundation seeks to achieve this goal through education, prevention, and provision of resources.

The Board of Directors, which is appointed by Sheriff Lemma, is made up of members of the community and the Sheriff's Office. This ensures that the foundation is a representation of the people it serves, and allows it to effectively address their needs.



The foundation plays a vital role in creating a safer and more equitable society for all. Its programs go a long way in empowering individuals and communities to overcome challenges and lead fulfilling lives. Programs supported by the Foundation include but are not limited to:

- Shop with the Sheriff
- Halloween Safety Spooktacular
- Christmas Village
- Police Athletic League
- Employee Engagement Team

**These events are possible because of charitable donations to our Community Foundation.**





# Shop with the Sheriff

In 2024, a memorable back-to-school shopping experience was provided to **323 students**, allowing them to select new clothes and essentials during our annual Shop with the Sheriff event. This initiative was made possible largely due to the generous support of community partners, sponsors, and members of the Sheriff's Office.

This event also serves as a valuable mentoring opportunity, with deputies and agency members guiding the students. It helps to equip them for success in the upcoming school year, enhancing their confidence and self-esteem in the classroom. Shop with the Sheriff is a hallmark event of our Community Foundation, fully funded through charitable donations.

We deeply value and appreciate the generous support of our sponsors, particularly our Presenting Sponsor, AdventHealth, as well as our site sponsors, Wal-Rose and Orlando Health, whose contributions made the event possible and successful. Watch the event unfold by viewing the video [here](#).





# Halloween Spooktacular:

## A Family Friendly, Spooky Event

In October, the SCSO organized the annual Halloween Safety Spooktacular, sponsored by The Hartford, and hosted at Seminole State College. The event proved to be a tremendous success once more, with families coming together to enjoy complimentary Trunk-or-Treating and snow cones provided by our Snow Patrol. Star 94.5 and K92.3 FM entertained the crowd with music, while various community partners and sponsors contributed to this family-oriented celebration. The event was a resounding success, drawing in over **2,500 attendees** of all ages. The atmosphere was filled with joy and excitement, ensuring that a wonderful time was had by all. Discover the event highlights by watching the video [here](#).

Presented by  
The Hartford





# 23rd Annual Christmas Village

## Spreading **Holiday** Cheer

Each December, the SCSO collaborates with care providers to organize a special holiday celebration for children in foster care or those who are underserved. Volunteers work diligently to collect donations and raise funds to buy thousands of toys, creating a Christmas Village filled with games, crafts, and a visit from Santa. While the children enjoy the festivities, their parents or caregivers have the opportunity to “shop” for toys to take home for Christmas morning. Community members and businesses contribute by organizing toy drives, donating toys, or providing monetary support.

The 2024 event was once again hosted at the SCSO headquarters, which offered more space for activities, improved parking, and allowed families who couldn't attend the event to still receive toys. This community-driven initiative helped fulfill the Christmas wishes of just over **400 children**.

AdventHealth was the Presenting Sponsor for the event, and we couldn't have done it without the incredible support of the organizations and people who joined us in providing the children of our community with the joyous Christmas experience they all deserve. Click [here](#) to watch highlights of the 2024 Christmas Village event.







# Backing the Blue

## Seminole County Sheriff Foundation

### Supports our Members



The Seminole County Sheriff Foundation, Inc. is a committed 501(c)(3) organization that brings together charitable donors, community leaders, and non-profit organizations. Its mission is to provide support for the employees of the Seminole County Sheriff's Office and their families through philanthropic efforts. In 2024, the Sheriff Foundation offered **\$72,969 in support** to our agency members in need. Since its establishment in 2018, the Foundation has granted a total of \$409,613. Furthermore, the Foundation aims to enhance community safety by investing in innovative tools and technology that our agency can utilize to ensure a safer environment for all.

All funds are generated through events such as the Blue Line Gala and the sale of "Hero Homes". In December 2024, construction was completed on Seminole County's first "Hero Home" located in unincorporated Casselberry. The home was built and sold by numerous community-minded partners. Click [here](#) to watch a video of the "Hero Home" ribbon cutting ceremony.





# Keep In Touch With Us!



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## Follow Us On!

