

# Annual Report of the Washington Police Department

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2009 has proven to be another year of growth and change for the Washington Police Department. We are busier than we have been in the past, and the seriousness of the crimes we are handling is getting more concerning. However, we have continued to meet these challenges and live up to our unofficial motto that "small does not mean unprofessional".

The year's activities actually started with our response to the Ice Storm of 2008 in December. During the period of the emergency we were able to provide nearly 24-hour coverage for the full duration of the event, as well as command presence in the EOC. In addition to responding to requests for service we coordinated with the Emergency Management Director and Sullivan County Department of Corrections to transport a work crew of inmates to assist with recovery and clean up.

With the dismal economy we were preparing for an increase in domestic violence and property related crimes such as thefts and burglaries. Fortunately, the anticipated trends did not come to fruition. Our burglaries are down 2008, and the domestics did not seem to happen. However, what we did see was an increase in vacant house check requests, and pistol permit applications.

In general however, our activity is up from 2008. The full report of Department activity will follow. You will see a large jump in the bottom line number of both calls for service and motor vehicle activity. Disturbingly, we saw an increase in the number of civil or neighborhood complaints we responded to. These are situations in which neighbors, or Associations had differences that they could not resolve over a cup of coffee and the police were asked to get involved in some form or fashion. These are very time consuming for us, and prevent us from being on patrol.

However all is not gloom and doom and gloom in Washington. We are still a very safe, fun, and productive community.

2009 saw the first time that a Washington Police officer has instructed the DARE program at the Elementary School. Ofc. Tim Puchtler taught the class to the 17 students in the 5<sup>th</sup> grade class. In the past we had to hire in an instructor from another Department, so it was nice to see the Washington uniform in the classroom.

Ofcs. John Corrigan, Aaron Smith and I took turns with taking the monthly Students of the Month to lunch with the support of the many sponsors. In addition to the formal lunch program we could be found on other days eating in the cafeteria or playing at recess with them.

Public Safety Explorer Post #86 was started in a cooperative effort between the Police, Fire & Rescue Departments this year. While the learning curve of how to run an Explorer Post has been steep, we hope to keep that going and be more active in 2010. I was still involved in the NH Police Cadet Academy during the summer, and Ofcs. Moser & Corrigan participated in part of the training. One of the Explorers, Chris Tanner, completed the Basic session. We hope to see Chris back for the Advanced and others for the Basics next summer.

Although we lost our loaner ATV due to a business disagreement between the dealer and manufacturer we still did our trail patrols in the woods. We appreciate Bob Wright allowing

us to use his machine until we can make other arrangements for a town machine. In the winter we conduct snowmobiles patrols on the trails, with a primary focus on getting to the remote properties, but also enforcement on operators not following the rules or keeping the sport safe.

Your police department continues to provide you full public safety capabilities. In addition to being certified police officers, in various combinations we are also firefighters, EMTs, and Deputy Fire Wardens. The officers have all been told that the phrase, "it is not my job" should not apply when someone calls for assistance.

We are now subscribed to Nixle.com. Nixle is a public service notification system that the emergency services can use to notify citizens of important information. The subscribers can enroll, at no cost, and opt to receive the messages by text messaging, email and web service. It is a secure and private system. There are no ads or pop-ups and your address is not sold to any other agency or enterprise. We have used this system to warn of suspicious vehicles/people, burglaries sprees, road closings, approaching weather emergencies, flu clinics and hearings. I encourage all residents and property owners to subscribe. Just go to [www.nixle.com](http://www.nixle.com) and select Washington, NH.

Also, for those that have not been getting my periodical e-newsletter, I apologize. In the beginning of the year the Department computer was replaced. In the process of migrating to a new e-mail program some of the address were lost. If you have not been getting the newsletter, and wish to get back on the list, please e-mail me at [police@washingtongnh.org](mailto:police@washingtongnh.org).

During the year we lost the service of Ofc. Aaron Smith. Aaron's career and family life took him to Florida where he is now a Deputy with the Pasco County Sheriff's Department. We appreciated the time, service and dedication that he gave to the Town for the 4 ½ years he was with us and wish him, JJ and Matthew well in this new chapter in their lives. Although a not a "formal" member of the Department, we are fortunate in having Tpr. Mark Barrett live in Town. Mark acts as the 5<sup>th</sup> patrol officer for our department, answering the phone, handling calls and backing us up when needed. The color of the uniform and patch on the shoulder does not matter; our mission and goal are the same.

Nationally, 2009 was a safer year for police officers than 2008. But of note, sadly, there were 3 instances of multiple murders of police officers. In the cities of Pittsburgh, Oakland and Lakewood, WA the officers killed in each incident equaled the entire staff of our department. It is of the highest degree of importance to me that our officers are safe and well trained. Well-trained officers results in better service for the community, more efficient use of your tax dollars and reduces risk of injury payments and lawsuits. We have done very well in that area.

In 2010 I hope to continue that level of commitment to my staff and community. This will require some hard decisions. To meet your demands for more visibility and response to complaints, I will be asking to increase hours for the part-time officers. I will not be replacing Ofc. Smith with another body, but will be using the current officers more. With this increased patrol time, the cruiser is getting more usage than originally planned. Discussion will have to take place about the cost effectiveness of on-going repairs and maintenance, replacement or addition to our fleet.

We all appreciate the support and generosity you give to the Department and the staff. As I enter my 27<sup>th</sup> year in law enforcement I look forward to continuing to meet the goals and

needs of the community, the governing body, my officers and staff and my family. I appreciate you allowing me the opportunity to do that for the past 11 years.

We wish all of you a productive, happy, health and most importantly safe 2010. For Ofc. Brian Moser, John Corrigan & Tim Puchtler, Admin. Asst. Michelle Dagesse,

Respectfully,

*Steven I. Marshall*

Steven I. Marshall  
Chief of Police