

Annual Community Relations/Crime Prevention Report 2021

This Community Relation/Crime Prevention report covers programs and events for the period of January 1, 2021 through December 31, 2021.

Overview

The Ashland Police Department utilizes crime prevention programs and events conducted throughout the year to reduce victimization. The Ashland Police Department strives to educate our citizens on crime prevention methodology so that we may deter crime and improve the quality of life for our citizens. 2021 continued to be a challenging year for the Department for the production of crime prevention programs as schools were closed to outside presentations and many in-person and special events were cancelled due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

Crime Prevention produced **24 crime prevention events** to our citizens and business partners during 2021. Programs requested were business security assessments, personal safety, senior citizen safety, impaired driving, fraud prevention. Information regarding crimes is also presented to the neighborhood watch programs to ensure neighborhoods are familiar with current criminal trends.

Public Safety Education and Community Engagement

- **Neighborhood Watch**

We currently have **11** neighborhood watch communities. These communities are:

- Ashland Woods Apartments
- Berkley Town
- Hanover Apartments
- Laurel Woods Apartments
- Sedgefield Mobile Home Park
- South Center Street Historic District
- South Taylor Street
- Ashland Town Square Apartments
- Trotters Mill Close Community Association
- Cottage Green Townhomes
- Henry Clay Road

Four neighborhood watch meetings were conducted in 2021. Each meeting consists of a review of recent crime trends, a crime prevention education presentation and open forum for residents to express concerns to officials.

- **Adopt-a-Senior Program**



The Department, in partnership with the Hanover/Ashland TRIAD maintains an Adopt-a-Senior program whereby officers are assigned to visit homebound senior citizens in our community. In cooperation with our TRIAD, the Hanover County Sheriff's Office and generous local businesses our program provides Thanksgiving dinners, Christmas presents and other holiday events to our participating seniors. Officers conducted **20 Senior Visits** in 2021.

Our adopted senior in 2021 was Mrs. Nancy Dobbins

- **Shop-with-a-Cop**

The Department's manages an annual "Shop-with-a-Cop" Holiday program using donations from throughout the community to provide gifts and food for deserving families in Town during the Christmas season. In 2021, over \$6,000 in donations of money and product from the community helped our program serve **50 children** from **19 different families**. We also continued our partnership with Ashland Christian Emergency Services by producing a Holiday Toy and Coat giveaway in the NP-STAR neighborhood.

- **Impaired and Distracted Driving Prevention**

The prevention of impaired and distracted driving has become a focus for our crime prevention program. Lecture and Simulated and Impaired Driving Experience (SIDNE) presentations are conducted for high-school and college students detailing the dangers of impaired and distracted driving.



Additionally, presentations were introduced for new drivers to address distracted driving and how to handle interactions with law enforcement during traffic stops. These presentations were made to church youth groups and parent

organized groups of teenagers new to driving to make a connection with these groups and explain the procedures officers follow during traffic stops.

- **Security Assessments**

Four security assessments were conducted in 2021. Security assessments are conducted after criminal incidents and at the location's request.

- **Community Contacts**

During 2021, officers made **565 community contacts** with citizens.

- **Child Safety Seat Inspections**

The Department inspected **10** child safety seats in 2021.

- **Foot Patrols/Bank Checks/Property Checks**

Officers routinely conduct "Park, Walk and Talk" (PWT) foot patrols and property checks in commercial and residential areas. Officers conducted **5,051 PWT and Bank Check activities** and **23,292 property checks** in 2021.



- **Crime Prevention Presentations**

During 2021, **nine crime prevention presentations** were made to businesses, neighborhood watch groups and other community organizations covering topics such as scam identification and avoidance, identity theft, substance abuse prevention, and personal safety.

- **Crime Prevention through Environmental Design Plan Reviews**

During this calendar year, **45 construction plans** were reviewed. Plans are reviewed to ensure landscaping, lighting and security systems are constructed using best practices for the respective application.

- **Schools/Daycares**

- Daily visits were conducted to the schools and day cares to promote and foster relationships. This includes lunchtime visits and recreational visits on the playgrounds. Officers performed **174 school and daycare visits** in 2021.
- In 2021, Department Crime Prevention personnel assisted the Hanover County Sheriff's Office in conducting **two** "Signal Blue" intruder drills at public schools in and near Town. These drills are conducted to train staff and prepare students in response procedures during critical incidents.

- Crime Prevention provides crisis planning and response presentations to our private school and daycares in Town.

- **Association Meetings**

During 2021, Crime Prevention attended **seven association meetings** with several organizations, including Ashland/Hanover TRIAD Senior Group, Market Ashland Partnership and other community groups. TRIAD is a partnership between local law enforcement, the AARP, the Virginia Attorney General's Office and other service providers that assists senior citizens with crime prevention activities. Market Ashland Partnership is an organization of over 100 businesses in the Ashland area that provides joint marketing efforts as well as a forum for cooperative business interests, including loss and crime prevention topics.

- **Intra-Governmental Cooperation**

Crime Prevention personnel conduct joint activities with the Town Zoning Administration officials to reduce nuisances and potential crime generators. In 2021, officers conducted **two inspections** with zoning officials.

- **National Drug Take-Back Events**

The Ashland Police Department, in cooperation with the DEA and Hanover County Sheriff's Office, conducted two drug take-back events to collect old and un-used prescription drugs to be destroyed. This ensured that the waterways are protected from contamination as well as keeping prescriptions from falling into the wrong hands. In 2021, our site collected **406 lbs.** of unwanted prescription drugs.



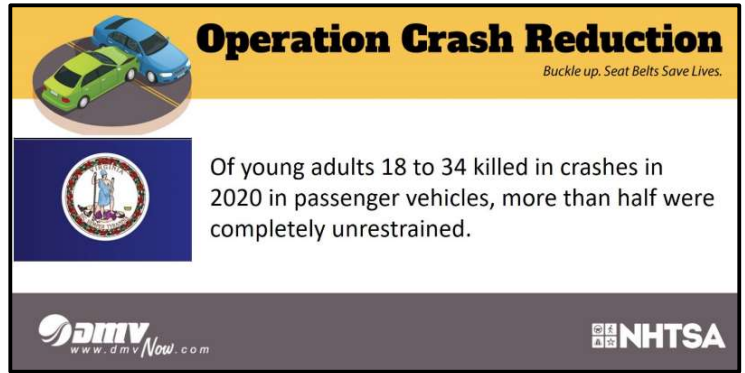
- **Crime Statistics & Intelligence**

To educate citizens and businesses about criminal incidents and crime trends in our community, the Department maintains a crime statistic mapping application on our website. Citizens can review crime report information at any time, make inquires to the Crime Prevention Officer as well as present timely, interactive information to community groups and associations.

Crime Prevention also assists in developing crime intelligence data for each section of APD as well as sharing information with other agencies through participation in Hanover County's Crime Management Initiative and regional crime intelligence meetings. Data includes crime trends, hot-spot analysis, officer safety bulletins and pawn report analysis.

- **Social Media and Internet Presence**

APD uses Facebook, Twitter and our Department website in an ongoing effort to provide crime prevention education to our community. This includes social media posts providing useful tips and suggestions as well as more immediate notices about criminal and suspicious activity. Crime Prevention uses press releases and e-mail “blasts” to neighborhood watches to further disseminate information.



Due to ongoing Coronavirus restrictions, many of our crime prevention and community policing content normally presented in person were offered on social media to continue our reach to residents.

In 2021, we increased our social media footprint. From January 2021 to December 2021, Facebook followers increased from **5,373 to 6,694**, a **25% increase**. There were **197** social media posts that reached **592,887** people, a **30% increase** in reach over 2020.

- **Traffic & Pedestrian Safety**

Crime Prevention and Traffic Safety continued to partner to provide our “Be Safe Be Seen” pedestrian and bicyclist safety program to our residents. Officers distributed bright drawstring bags to residents and students to encourage safe habits.



- **Public Education Efforts**

Crime Prevention offers presentations to various groups throughout the community in an effort to educate residents regarding how law enforcement accomplishes our mission. Using our Use of Force simulator, demonstrations by specialized units such as Investigations as well as discussions reviewing different aspects of police work, we provide insight on how police officers ensure the safety of the community.

In 2021, we provided **four education presentations** for groups including Randolph-Macon College students, day care students and youth groups.

- **Coffee-with-a-Cop**



Despite the Coronavirus Pandemic, a **Coffee-with-a-Cop** event aimed at increasing positive police interaction with specific populations in Town. Events was conducted at Wawa.

- **Kona-with-a-Cop**

APD continued our “Kona-with-a-Cop” effort, with **two events** in 2021. Officers escorted the Kona Ice Truck throughout Town and gave away free Kona Ice to children and families in several neighborhoods. This program helped our officers meet approximately 600 residents in a positive way.

- **Project Lifesaver**

Crime Prevention maintains APD’s Project Lifesaver program. This program provides members of our community prone to wandering off due to dementia, autism or another issue with tracking transmitters at no cost to the clients or their families. Assigned officers visit the client monthly to check the transmitter, replace batteries and positively interact with these vulnerable and at-risk members of our community.

Officers made **22 Project Lifesaver visits** in 2021.

- **National Night Out**

In August 2021, the Ashland Police Department, Town Staff and Town Council members visited our neighborhoods, enjoyed food, conversation and had a great time with our citizens during our annual National Night Out. This provided an opportunity for citizens to have contact and become familiar with the members of the government that serve them. **Four** communities participated in NNO.



Crime Prevention Activities by Month

February

- February 3: Shoplifting Reduction meeting with Walmart General Manager.
- February 18: Participated in R-MC virtual Criminal Justice Career Fair.

March

- March 12: MAP & TRAIID Meetings.

April:

- April 6: Bike Safety Rodeo at Toddler Town.
- April 14: Presentation to R-MC Spanish Class.
- April 14: Cadet Class Instruction - Physical Training.
- April 20: Participated in Toy Drive for Children's Day 2021 with YMCA.
- April 24: Drug Take-Back; 270 lbs. collected.
- April 28: Emergency Response Discussion with RMC student.

May:

- May 3: LE Presentation to Cub Scout Group.
- May 16: LE Appreciation Day - Green Top.
- May 22: Traffic Stop Presentation to New Drivers at APD.
- May 27: Signal Blue Henry Clay ES.

June:

- June 7 & 14, 2021: Completed Town Employee Fitness Assessments.
- June 10: TRIAD Meeting.
- June 14 & 24, 2021: Creative Market Group Meeting(s) for Recruitment and Social Media blitz.
- June 25, 2021: Attended COVID Thank You luncheon.

July:

- July 7: Berkley Woods HOA Meeting.
- July 8: TRIAD Meeting.
- July 21: Kona with a Cop.
- July 22: Berkley Woods HOA Meeting.
- July 28: Lance & Bridle POA Meeting.

August:

- August 3: National Night Out and Kona-with-a-Cop throughout Town.
- August 4: Security Assessment at Ashland Theatre.
- August 12: Cadet Training.

September:

- September 10: Attended RMC Fall Carnival.

- September 16: Cadet Training.
- September 25: Crime Prevention & Traffic Safety in partnership with the Ashland Kiwanis conducted a Child Seat Check event at Walmart.

October

- October 7: Silent No More Presentation (Virtual).
- October 14: TRIAD Meeting.
- October 14: APD Cadet Training.
- October 22: Alcohol safety presentation for R-MC Delta Zeta Sorority.
- October 23: Drug Take Back; 136 lbs. collected.

November

- November 4: TRIAD meeting.
- November 11: MAP meeting.
- November 16: APD Cadet Training.
- November 22: Ashland Woods Neighborhood Watch meeting.
- November 24: TRIAD Adopt-a-Senior Thanksgiving Dinner delivery.

December

- December 2: MADD "Tie One on for Safety" Kick Off 2021 Event.
- December 7: Hanover AARP 20th Anniversary Event.
- December 9: TRIAD Adopt-a-Senior Holiday Luncheon.
- December 17: NP-STAR Holiday Yard Sale Coat & Toy Give-away.
- December 20-21: Shop-with-a-Cop Holiday Deliveries.

Our goals for 2022:

- Continue to work to rebuild crime prevention and community policing events as Covid restrictions are reduced. Programs include:
 - Neighborhood Watch Meetings (re-establish quarterly meetings);
 - Youth presentations;
 - Crime Prevention presentations;
 - Personal Protection presentations;
 - Association Meetings;

- Kona-with-a-Cop;
- Coffee-with-a-Cop.

- Develop and implement weekly on-site “blitz” efforts in vulnerable neighborhoods to educate residents in securing vehicles and property to reduce larcenies.

- Develop and implement an intervention program for site visits of businesses that have experienced larcenies of catalytic converters.

- Identify businesses vulnerable to catalytic converter theft in advance and implement a direct public education campaign using site visits with management.

- Continue to expand our social media presence and leverage it to educate residents about crime prevention strategies.