

Americus Police Department

2022 REPORT TO THE COMMUNITY



Page 2

Message from the Chief

Turn to Page 2 for a message from Chief of Police, Mark A. Scott, and to page 3 for a summary of the crime statistics for 2022.

Page 4

Community Relations

Turn to page 4 for a summary of our community involvement initiatives in 2022.

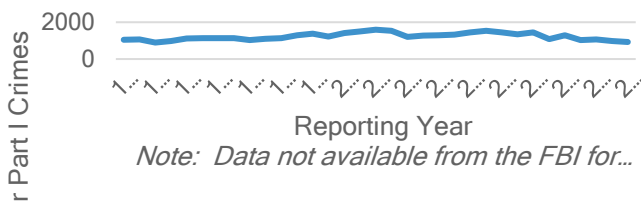


Page 6

Operations Analysis

Turn to Page 6 for an analysis of department operations, including traffic enforcement, vehicle pursuits, and use of force incidents.

Americus, GA UCR Part I Crime Totals
1985 through 2022



2022 CRIME STATISTICS

The number of reported Part I Crimes in the City of Americus continued the downward trend. Turn to Page 3 for a summary of current statistics and a look at the numbers over the past 36 years.

Message from the Chief



As we enter a brand-new year, we see 2023 stretched out before us with unknown promise and challenge. The key to a successful year for the police department is largely dependent on maintaining and strengthening our partnerships with the community. 2022 was a year filled with both accomplishment and challenge. One of our annual goals as a police agency is always to try to reduce the number of crimes committed in the city. I'm happy to say that we accomplished that goal for the sixth straight year with an overall reduction in reported incidents of 8.2%. Part I Crime (serious incidents such as Robbery, Burglary and Aggravated Assault) decreased 5.6% from 727 to 686 incidents. Part II Crime (less serious incidents such as Shoplifting, Theft, and Criminal Trespass) decreased 10% from 1041 to 937 incidents. Overall reported crime decreased from 1768 to 1623 incidents. The number of aggravated assaults decreased 4% from 109 to 105 reported incidents, but the number of reported incidents of shots fired into houses continued to increase with an 80% increase over 2021 from 21 to 38 incidents. It is a baffling phenomenon with crime decreasing in almost all categories, except for incidents of young men shooting into houses and vehicles.

One of our biggest challenges for 2023 is to address the escalating number of gun crimes being committed in Americus and Sumter County. We must somehow address the cultural shift in our community and across the nation that seems to be teaching our young people that personal disputes and arguments are best solved by driving by a rival's home or the home of a relative and riddling the property with bullets. We are working with One Sumter and the UGA Fanning Institute for Leadership to sponsor a violent crime summit which is scheduled for February of 2023. The summit will bring criminal justice and community partners together to discuss ways that we can all work cooperatively to end the scourge of gun crimes plaguing our community. Our hope is that by sharing information and resources we can better address the root causes of violent behavior and give our young men and women a clear vision of the opportunities available to them in our community.

Like many of you, we had hoped that the CoVID pandemic would be a thing of the past by now, but it lingers on and on. Keeping safety in mind, it is our plan to fully resume our community outreach programs in 2023. We are working with our current Neighborhood Watch Captains to revitalize the existing watch groups and are also working to identify new neighborhoods that are interested in starting a Neighborhood Watch Program. If you are interested in this program, contact Sgt. Carolina Pittman at 229-924-3677, ext. 347 for more information. We also hope to resume sessions of our Citizen's Police Academy this year and will be working with the Sumter County School system to offer a summer program for our Intermediate School Students.

In closing, the men and women of your police department are dedicated to serving the people of our community and committed to providing service to the community based on our core values of Honesty, Integrity, and Respect. We welcome community input and cannot effectively operate without community support.

Wishing you a joyous, safe and prosperous 2023,

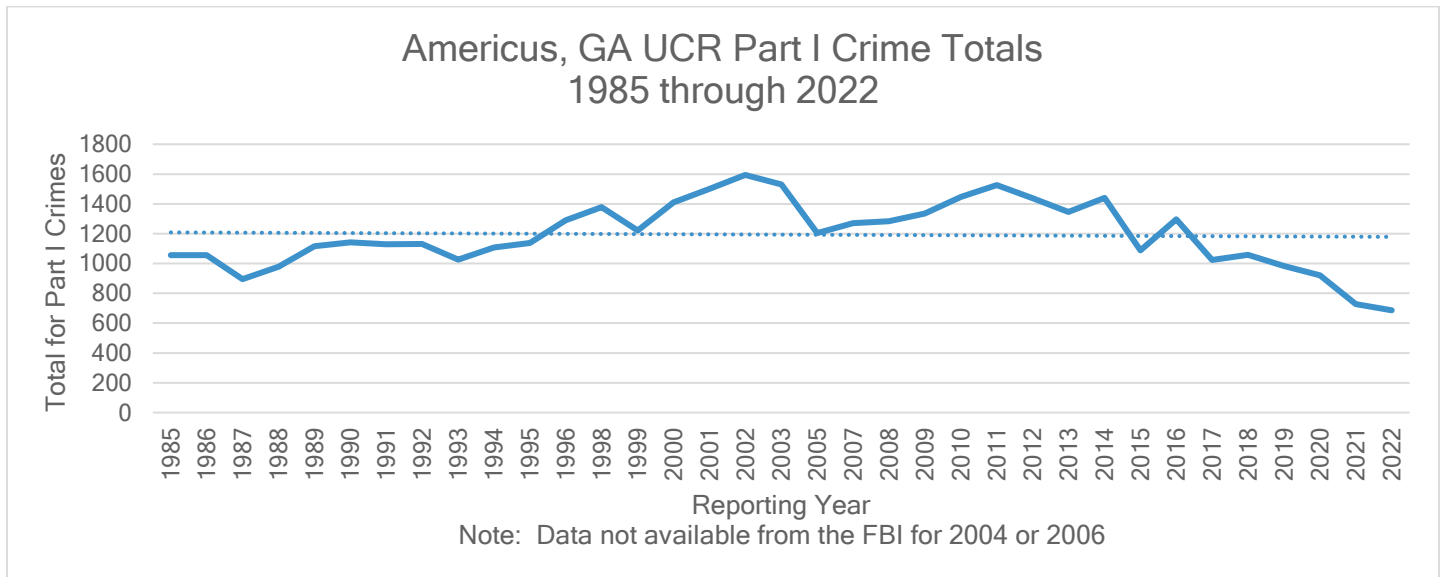
Accreditation

The Americus Police Department is a State Certified and Nationally Accredited Law Enforcement Agency. This means that we voluntarily comply with a comprehensive set of standards published by the Georgia Association of Chiefs of Police through the Georgia Law Enforcement Certification Program (GLECP) and standards published by the Committee on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies (CALEA). The department participated in an audit of over 100 standards by CALEA assessors in November. We were found to be in full compliance with all standards, with no issues identified. We will undergo a final file audit in 2023 followed by an on site assessment by a CALEA assessment team. Our state standards are due for assessment in 2023 and we will host a team of auditors from GLECP simetime during the summer.



Accreditation is a big deal. There are only a handful of nationally accredited agencies in the State of Georgia and across the nation. Accreditation is important, because it encourages us to constantly review our policies and practices and stay current with the accepted best practices and legal changes that govern how we do business. Two of the main areas that open a law enforcement agency to liability are out of date policies and failure by employees to follow established policies and procedures. The accreditation process ensures that our policies and procedures are constantly being reviewed and updated as the standards are updated. Annual reviews of our files by CALEA staff ensure that we are current with best practices and that we are actually doing the things that our policies say we should do.

Crime Statistics



The men and women of the Americus Police Department work tirelessly 24 hours a day to provide a timely and effective response to criminal activity reported to us by the public. We also strive, through routine patrol operations, directed patrol, special projects, and public education to prevent as much crime as we possibly can. Our constant goal is to make the City of Americus a safe place to live, work and play.

Each month we report our crime statistics to the FBI along with most of the other law enforcement agencies in the United States. The FBI makes an annual summary of these statistics available to the

public each year in a publication called "Crime in the United States". It is available on the FBI's web site and is usually one year behind, meaning that the report posted at the end of 2022 is based on 2021 numbers. Fortunately for us, we can access our crime statistics in real time and are able to provide the public with the information as soon as the calendar year ends.

We are pleased to report that our Part I Crime numbers for 2022 continued a downward trend, decreasing 5.6% from 2021 and are once again the lowest they have been in over 30 years. In fact, going all the way back to 1985, which is the earliest date that these reports are available online, we have never had a year with lower numbers! Part I Crimes are the more serious crimes tracked by the FBI and include Homicide, Rape, Robbery, Aggravated Assault, Burglary, Larceny from an Auto, Larceny Other, Vehicle Theft and Arson. These are all crimes that are generally reported to the police by the public and are driven by criminal activity, rather than police activity. These types of crimes tend to be relatively constant in a community and are a good indicator of trends in criminal activity.

Taking a closer look at the numbers, the overall decrease is primarily driven by a 7% decrease in crimes against persons, including homicide, rape, robbery and aggravated assault, and a 5% decrease in property crime which involves the theft of, theft from, or damage to property. The number of aggravated assaults decreased 4% from 109 to 105 reported incidents, but the number of reported incidents of shots fired into houses continued to increase with an 80% increase over 2021 from 21 to 38 incidents. Clearly, if we as a community can change the culture of gun violence permeating many of our neighborhoods, our incidents of violent crime will decrease dramatically.

Crime analysis is a multifaceted process, and though as a police department we would like to take full credit for the reduction in overall serious crime, there are many different factors at work. Addressing violent street crime is difficult. We work diligently to identify those responsible for specific incidents and arrest them, but arrests do not address the root issues of poverty, erosion of family structure, and the proliferation of street gangs (which are glorified by our current pop culture). Addressing root causes of crime cannot be effectively accomplished by the police alone but can be addressed by the community as a whole, working together.

We also track and report Part II Crime numbers to the FBI. These are crimes that the FBI considers to be less serious such as simple assault, criminal trespass, drug charges, disorderly conduct, forgery, DUI of alcohol or drugs, etc. These numbers reflect both crimes reported to the police by citizens and crimes discovered by the police through patrol operations. Part II Crime numbers can vary considerably, based on the activities of the police. The number of Part II Crimes documented by the agency decreased by 10% from 2021 to 2022. The main areas of decrease were in minor assaults, which decreased by 22%, forgeries, which decreased 31%, criminal trespass charges, which decreased by 9% and felony drug charges, which decreased by 21%. Arrests for disorderly conduct increased by 29% while arrests for DUI decreased by 5%.

Community Relations

It is the responsibility of every employee of the Americus Police Department to foster a positive relationship with members of our community. All employees are encouraged to be active participants in community activities and many employees are members of local civic and service organizations and serve as volunteer coaches and mentors. Sgt. Carolina Pittman is responsible for helping to coordinate our community relations activities.



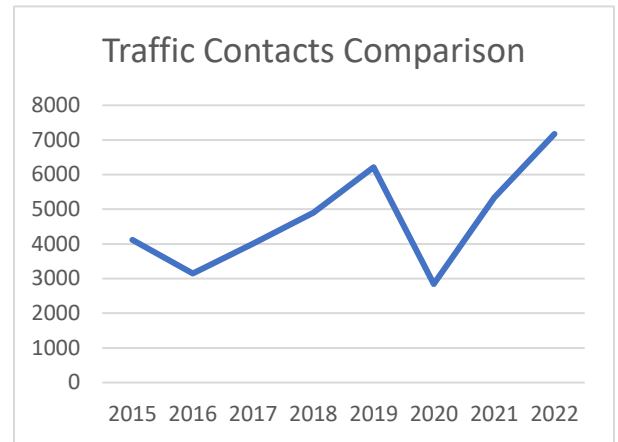
With the decline in CoVID cases in 2022 we were able to move back toward normal operations in our community relations efforts. Our goal was to balance the need for safety with the need to engage with our community in a positive manner. Below is a partial list of our community activities for 2022:

- Completed the GREAT Summer Program with 18 participants.
- Participated in a Health Fair with PSMC, giving out safety information.
- Resumed in-person GREAT classes in the school system.
- Participated in Grandparents Day at Perfect Care.
- Participated in First Friday activities.
- Implemented an Operation Clear Track initiative with CSX Railroad.
- Participated in Taste of Sumter.
- Provided personnel and vehicles for the JSR Cowpoke Carnival.
- Hosted Southland Academy 3rd Grade Students on a visit to the Public Safety Building.
- Hosted a Coffee with A Cop event at Sweet Georgia Baking.
- Assisted with the SCHS Homecoming Parade.
- Visited First Baptist Preschool for Career Day.
- Attended a breakfast for Faith and Blue Weekend at Friendship Baptist.
- Set up a table with safety information at the Downtown Music Fest.
- Participated in several events with the residents at Magnolia Manor.
- Participated in Red Ribbon Week events.
- Provided a program for Beautiful Minds.
- Led the Kiwanis Pet Parade.
- Participated in Downtown Trick or Treat giving out candy.
- Participated in a Halloween event at Sumter County Head Start.
- Attended a Career Event at Furlow Charter School.
- Hosted Thanksgiving Dinner with the Fire Department.
- Led the Christmas Parade and provided traffic control.
- Hosted our 7th Annual Shop with A Cop Event.
- Organized a Cops that Care Toy Giveaway.
- Took Christmas Gifts to the residents at Perfect Care.



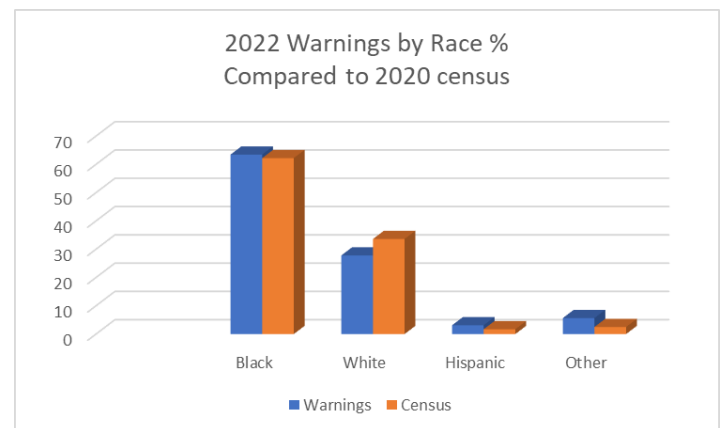
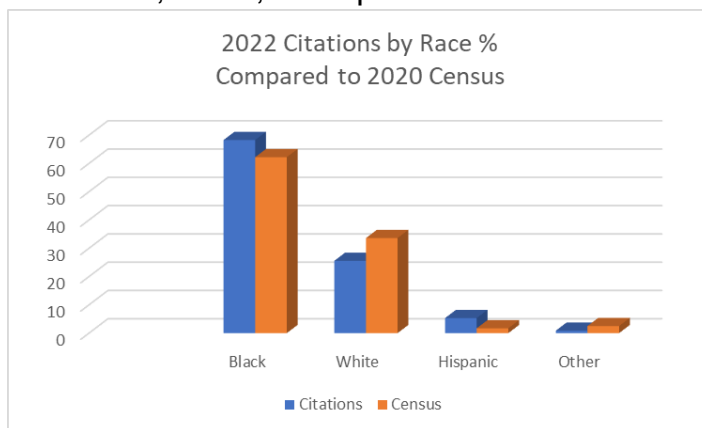
Traffic Enforcement Analysis

The number one goal of traffic enforcement is to try to decrease the number and severity of traffic accidents inside the city limits. Officers of the Americus Police department responded to 570 traffic accidents on the roadways of Americus and 215 on private property for a total of 785 traffic crashes in 2022. There were 73 reported injuries and thankfully, no fatalities. This is down considerably from the 826 roadway traffic accidents reported in 2021. An analysis of all traffic activity reveals that officers issued 3,123 citations and 4,051 warnings in 2022, for a total of 7,174 traffic contacts, which is a 25% increase in traffic contacts over the 5,335 traffic contacts documented in 2021. This increase is partially attributable to a return to normal traffic operations following the pandemic, but is primarily due to a renewed focus on traffic law enforcement in an effort to reduce the number of accidents with injury in the city. Given the significant reduction in accidents over last year, the strategy appears to be working.



Biased Based Profiling is clearly defined in Chapter 14-1 of the Americus Police Department Standard Operating Procedures Manual as the targeting of people based on their race, ethnic background, gender, sexual orientation, religion, economic status, age, cultural group, or any other identifiable group. This practice is strictly prohibited. For example, the fact that a person is African American, Hispanic, or a member of any other ethnic group is not a basis for suspecting that person of wrongdoing. Any law enforcement-initiated actions that rely upon membership in a particular people group, rather than on behavior are strictly prohibited and will not be tolerated. Such actions include but are not limited to traffic contacts, field contacts, and asset seizure and forfeiture efforts. No officer of the Americus Police Department shall endorse or act upon stereotypes, attitudes, or beliefs that a person’s background increases the probability that the person will act unlawfully. An individual may only be detained and/or law enforcement action taken based on factors related to a violation or the investigation of a violation of Federal Law, State Statute, or Local Ordinance.

The percentages in the accompanying charts and analyses are based on the data captured from the issuance of electronic citations and warnings. The number counted as “Other” reflects all races other than Black, White, or Hispanic.



There was one complaint made with the department in 2022 alleging bias-based profiling on traffic stops or officer/citizen contacts. The complaint was assigned to Internal Affairs and investigated. It was determined that the traffic stop was based on probable cause and a twelve month analysis of the

officer's citation history showed no evidence of racial bias. As depicted in the graphs, the racial breakdown of citations is a close match to the racial composition of the City of Americus according to official US Census data (2020 census data). There is nothing in the statistical analysis that indicates disparate treatment of persons in traffic enforcement encounters according to their race. Analyzing the data by gender shows that females of all races receive fewer citations and warnings than males. A recent study by the University of Michigan indicates that the number of male and female drivers on the road is evenly split with 51% being male and 49% being female on average. However, traffic analysis data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) shows that 57% of all traffic accidents involve male drivers and that male drivers are involved in 72% of all fatal traffic accidents. This statistic is a close match for the percentage of males in our jurisdiction who receive citations and may be a good explanation for the difference in traffic enforcement by gender.

Written Citations and Warnings Issued

	Citation	Warning	Census
Black	68%	63%	67%
White	26%	28%	29%
Hispanic	5%	3%	2%
Other*	1%	6%	2%
Male	68%	65%	44%
Female	32%	35%	56%

**The Other category includes those persons whose race was not recorded on the citation.*

Vehicle Pursuits

A pursuit is defined by department Standard Operating Procedure as: An active attempt by a law enforcement officer in a motor vehicle to apprehend one or more occupants of another moving motor vehicle, where the driver of the fleeing vehicle is aware of the attempt and is actively resisting apprehension.

The Americus Police Department is aware of the tendency for a violator to attempt to avoid arrest by fleeing the police. We are also aware that pursuit of violators poses a threat to the safety of all concerned and to non-involved citizens. This department therefore acknowledges both the utility of pursuit actions as necessary for apprehension and the importance of protecting the life and property of all persons. The decision to initiate pursuit is that of the individual officer, but at no time shall an officer act outside the parameters of department policy regarding chase or pursuit.

Pursuit is a judgment-initiated call that relies on good common-sense decisions on the part of the officer. Officers shall consider the following question when initiating pursuit; "Will the risk to other drivers be heightened because of the pursuit; and does the severity of the violation justify the risk involved?" Many factors must be considered when an officer decides to initiate pursuit. They include, but are not limited to:

1. Severity of Violation
2. Weather Conditions
3. Time of Day
4. Area of Pursuit (Open highway, residential, school zones, etc.)
5. Traffic Congestion/Pedestrian Activity
6. Jurisdiction

Traffic law enforcement is a major function of this department. Officers may employ basic apprehension action in order to stop a traffic law violator. However, once a traffic violator has clearly exhibited a

refusal to stop for police and an intention to elude, the officer shall cease pursuit and resume safe driving practices and attempt to bring the suspected violator to justice by other means. Pursuit of a motor vehicle for any traffic or misdemeanor violation is strictly prohibited.

When an officer knows that the occupant of a vehicle is a forcible felon (armed robbery, aggravated assault/battery or other violent crime, see OCGA 16-3-1) he/she may initiate and continue pursuit until such time as the forcible felon is apprehended or the risks associated with the pursuit outweigh the risks associated with the felon's escape. The primary principle the officer must keep in mind is the level of threat to innocent persons that the felon may pose if he or she escapes, compared to the possibility of injury to the pursuing officer or others resulting from the pursuit. Even in the case of a forcible felon, if at any time the officer or his/her supervisor feels that the threat of injury to others caused by the pursuit is greater than the threat of injury if the felon escapes, the pursuit must be terminated.

When an officer knows that the occupant of a vehicle is a felon, but not of a forcible nature, he/she may initiate pursuit of the felon vehicle. The standard for termination of the pursuit is much lower, however, for a non-forcible felon. Since the felon poses no known threat to life if he/she escapes, the lives of pursuing officers and innocent bystanders must not be risked in apprehending the felon. The pursuit may continue only as long as the pursuing officer and his/her supervisors feel that the pursuit does not pose a significant threat to the lives of others. If conditions change or the fleeing suspect exhibits a reckless disregard for others or an intentional attempt to hurt others, the pursuit must be terminated. For example, if a non-forcible felon disregards a stop sign or light, passes other vehicles, or in any way exhibits dangerous driving practices, the pursuit must be terminated.

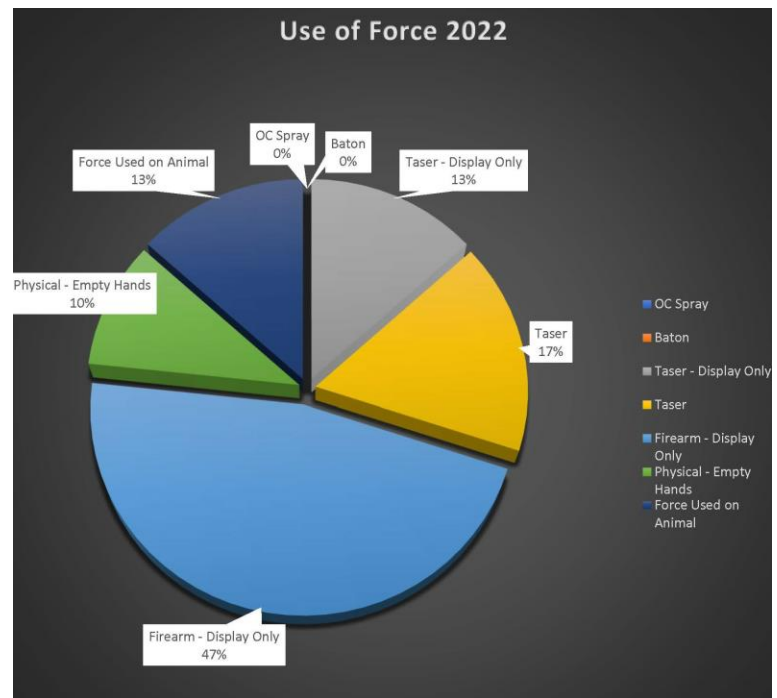
Juvenile drivers are statistically known to be less safe drivers than adults. Juvenile offenders are more likely to make poor decisions and take unnecessary risks when attempting to elude capture in a vehicle. When the pursuing officer knows or is almost certain that the fleeing vehicle is operated by a juvenile and the offense is a misdemeanor or non-forcible felony, pursuit should be immediately terminated. If the fleeing juvenile is known to have committed a forcible felony and poses a threat to others if allowed to escape the officer may initiate pursuit. However, the pursuing officer must take the age of the offender into consideration and should terminate the pursuit if the juvenile exhibits a pattern of driving which poses a greater risk of injury to others than the risk of the juvenile's escape.

There were four documented vehicle pursuits in 2022. All four pursuits were initiated on forcible felony suspects. Three of the pursuits ended with the capture of the suspect(s). One pursuit ended with the suspect escaping on foot. He was apprehended at a later date. There were no reported injuries in any of the incidents. All four pursuits were conducted within department guidelines.

Use of Force Analysis

Police officers are occasionally required to use physical force against persons who have committed a crime to make an arrest or to protect the life or wellbeing of others. It is the policy of the Americus Police Department that the value of human life is immeasurable and that officers will use only that force necessary to protect life and effect lawful objectives.

The Americus Police Department answered 35,401 calls for service in 2022, which is down slightly by less than 1% from the 35,752 calls for service in 2021. Officers made 1,208 arrests in 2022. This was up slightly by 5% over the 1,147 arrests made in 2021. Out of the 1,208 arrests, officers had to use some level of non-deadly force in 29 incidents or 2.4% of the time. The majority of the force reports, 47%, involved an officer drawing his/her sidearm when confronting an armed suspect. There were no incidents requiring an officer to discharge a firearm. The remaining force incidents involved the discharge or display of a Taser, or the use of weaponless physical force to bring a suspect under control. The race and gender of the officers involved were consistent with the demographics of the department. Six of these incidents resulted in minor injury or complaint of injury to the suspects arrested and two of the incidents resulted in minor injury to the officer making the arrest. All suspects complaining of injury were given medical evaluation and attention. No hospitalization was required in any of the incidents..



The Americus Police Department is governed by the United States Constitution, State law and department policy in its use of force to obtain lawful objectives. Officers are given extensive training in the use of force and are supplied with several options for dealing with a combative subject. Each time that force must be used by an officer, the officer must file a written report detailing the incident. These reports are reviewed by the Chief of Police and the department's Command Staff.

There are several different types of force which an officer may have to use in performing his or her duty. The type of force used by the officer is dictated primarily by the person with whom the officer is dealing. The first force option which officers may employ, aside from the officer's presence on the scene, is verbal. Officers of the Americus Police Department are trained in the proper way to use verbal commands and communication skills to convince a person to comply with the officer's requests. In most cases, verbal direction is all that is required by an officer to safely affect an arrest. If the officer is unable to verbally gain control of a suspect or if the suspect becomes violent toward the officer or toward others, officers are authorized to use other means to gain control of the suspect.

The next force option is empty hand physical control of a suspect. Officers are trained in a variety of tactics designed to allow the officer to gain physical control of a suspect resisting the officer's attempt to make an arrest. If an officer is unable to gain physical control of a suspect or if the suspect is violent and causing or threatening to cause harm to the officer or other persons, officers are authorized to use a variety of non-lethal devices to gain control of the violent suspect.

All sworn officers of the Americus Police Department are issued oleoresin capsicum (OC) spray. OC spray is a non-chemical natural agent made from the essence of cayenne or habanero pepper. The spray causes immediate irritation to the mucous membranes in the eyes, nose, mouth, and bronchial tubes of the person being sprayed. The initial effects of the spray last for 15 to 30 minutes with a burning sensation lasting for up to 60 minutes. The spray impairs the vision of the person sprayed and causes an intense burning sensation to the exposed skin and mucous membranes.

Officers are trained to provide a suspect with facilities to flush the affected areas with water as soon as possible after exposure. Normally, copious amounts of water and washing with non-oil-based soap are all that is required to counter the effects of the spray. Rarely is further treatment at a medical facility required. Officers are instructed during training to watch for respiratory distress or failure during transport of the suspect to the holding facility.

All sworn officers of the Americus Police Department are issued an expandable baton. The baton is designed as a defensive weapon to be used against a violent suspect. Officers are trained in the proper use of impact weapons and will only use impact weapons to counter a physical attack on the officer or on others by a suspect.

The police department utilizes Taser brand electronic incapacitation devices for use by sworn officers. Taser devices utilize compressed nitrogen to project two small probes up to 21 feet. These probes are connected to the Taser device by insulated wire. An electrical current is transmitted through the wires to where the probes make contact with the body or clothing, resulting in an immediate loss of the person's neuromuscular control and the ability to perform coordinated action for the duration of the impulse. Officers receive extensive training in the use of the device before the device is issued. The department has also implemented a clear and comprehensive policy which guides the use of the devices.

The final force option which officers may use is deadly force. The use of deadly force is strictly governed by both Georgia law and department policy. The Americus Police Department Use of Force Policy is as follows:

An officer may use lethal force only when the officer reasonably believes that the action is:

1. In defense of human life, including the officer's life or
2. In defense of any person in imminent danger of serious physical injury, or
3. When necessary to stop or prevent the commission of a forcible felony where the victim is in imminent danger of serious physical injury or death, or
4. In the apprehension of a fleeing felon, when:
 - a. The officer has probable cause to believe that a forcible felony has been committed and the person to be arrested has committed it, and
 - b. The officer has identified himself as a police officer and given notice of his/her intention to arrest (time and circumstances permitting), and
 - c. The officer reasonably believes that the suspect's freedom represents a significant imminent threat of serious physical injury or death to the officer or to other persons, and
 - d. All other reasonable means of apprehension have been exhausted or are precluded before lethal force is used. (Americus Police Department Standard Operating Procedures Manual)

Each time that an officer uses force to arrest a suspect, the officer must complete a Use of Force Report which is submitted to the Office of Professional Standards. Each report is reviewed by the Chief of Police and critiqued by the department's Command Staff.

Internal Affairs

It is the mission of the Americus Police Department to provide service to all citizens based on the foundations of honesty, integrity, and respect. To ensure that all employees maintain a culture of transparency and uphold our foundational values, the Americus Police Department treats all complaints against our employees seriously and all complaints made to the department are thoroughly investigated. To file a complaint, a person may contact any member of the Americus Police Department or come by the Public Safety Building at 119 S Lee Street to fill out a complaint form.

Control Number	Date	Nature of Complaint	Finding
2022IA0001	01/24/2022	False Arrest	Exonerated
2022IA0002	02/22/2022	Excessive Force	Sustained Other
2022IA0003	05/12/2022	Rudeness	Unfounded
2022IA0004	05/18/2022	Improper Touching	Unfounded
2022IA0005		Voided duplication	N/A
2022IA0006	05/29/2022	Illegal Traffic Stop	Unfounded
2022IA0007	06/07/2022	Illegal Traffic Stop	Unfounded
2022IA0008	06/07/2022	Disclosure of Confidential Information	Sustained Other
2022IA0009	06/08/2022	Illegal Traffic Stop	Unfounded
2022IA0010	06/11/2022	Improper Identification	Sustained Other
2022IA0011	05/24/2022	Harassment	Unfounded
2022IA0012	05/03/2022	Unlawful Detainment,	Unfounded
2022IA0013	05/03/2022	Unlawful Detainment,	Unfounded
2022IA0014	06/16/2022	Illegal Traffic Stop	Unfounded
2022IA0015	08/01/2022	Rudeness	Unfounded
2022IA0016	08/17/2022	Illegal Traffic Stop	Unfounded
2022IA0017	08/30/2022	Rudeness	Sustained
2022IA0018	09/01/2022	Failure to Investigate	Unfounded
2022IA0019	10/06/2022	Failure to Report Accident	Sustained
2022IA0020		Voided - Miscreation	N/A
2022IA0021	11/20/2022	Conduct Unbecoming	Sustained
2022IA0022	12/07/2022	Bias Based Profiling	Unfounded

The complaint form contains the name of the complainant, the name of the employee against whom the complaint is made, and a brief written summary of the complaint. Persons wishing to make a complaint against an employee are encouraged to make the complaint in person; however, the department will take complaints over the phone, through the internet, or by other means. Each formal complaint is assigned a tracking number and logged for follow up.

Internal affairs investigations may also be initiated at the request of the Chief of Police. Such investigations typically involve violations of department policy or situations involving one or more supervisors. Requests for consideration of disciplinary action may also be assigned for investigation through the internal affairs function.

There were twenty complaints made against a total of eleven different officers; some of which stemmed from internal complaints about policy violations, but most were made by different citizens from the community. All the complaints received by the department were recorded and thoroughly investigated. All the complaints were resolved in some manner and the results were relayed in a timely manner in accordance with policy to the original complainant by way of letter, in person meeting, or a phone contact or a combination thereof. The officer under investigation was notified of the findings as well.

Six of the twenty complaints were sustained to some degree, meaning that the employee was found to have committed some violation of department policy. Of these six, three were "sustained other" and likewise an additional three were deemed "sustained". All of the complaints classified as sustained or sustained other resulted in disciplinary action in some form to include suspension, demotion, written reprimand or verbal counseling and /or mandated training. One was exonerated due to the dynamics of the incident, meaning that something did occur, but the officer's actions were legal and justified. The remaining twelve complaints were ruled to be unfounded, meaning that the allegation made by the complainant was found to be untrue.

Recruitment

Through our recruitment efforts, we had 83 people either apply for the position of Police Officer or respond to an online interest form in 2022. That is over double the number of applicant contacts recorded in 2021. Unfortunately, out of all those contacts only nine people followed through by submitting an application for employment. Our recruitment team processed the nine actual applications, and we were able to hire five people for the position of Police Officer. The Americus Police Department has an ethnic composition that is 16 percentage points over the community demographics for Caucasians and 10 percentage points under the community demographics for African Americans. This is a recent reversal of the ethnic makeup of the department, which has been consistent over the past five years. Other ethnic groups, including Hispanics, comprise 11% of the service population, and comprise 5.4% of the department's sworn officers. The number of ethnic groups listed as Other in Americus rose significantly in the 2020 census data. Although the composition of the department is not an exact match with the community, it is much more representative than other departments in the Southeastern United States, according to statistics from the US Department of Justice. Nevertheless, our goal is to mirror the community we serve as closely as possible, and we will continue to recruit and hire the best possible applicants to meet that goal.

As of January of 2023, we have nine vacant positions for police officer (one of our current officers is on long term military leave). We have aggressively recruited applicants through advertisements and attendance at career fairs over the past year. The demographic composition of the applicants processed in 2022 and the demographic of the department are depicted in the following tables.

Recruitment Activities from January 1 to December 31, 2022

Race/Sex	Applications Received	Applicants Hired	Percent Hired	Percent of workforce
Caucasian/Male	2	1	50%	16%
Caucasian/Female	1	0	0	18%
African American/Male	2	2	100%	30.5%
African American/Female	4	2	50%	26.5%
Hispanic/Male	0	0		2%
Hispanic/Female	0	0		2%
Other	0	0		5%
Total	9	5	56%	100%

Current Composition of Sworn Employees

	WHITE		BLACK		OTHER		TOTAL
	Male	Female	Male	Female	Male	Female	
Number on Staff	15	0	13	5	2	0	35
Percentage of Staff	42.8%	0%	37.2%	14.3%	5.7%	0%	100%

Department Profile Compared to 2020 Census			
	Black	White	Other
Department	51.4%	43.2%	5.4%
2020 Census	62%	27%	11%

Community Partners

The police department could not work in this community effectively without the cooperation and support of our community partners. It would be impossible to list all the groups and individuals that have given us support over the past year. One group, however, does deserve recognition for their major contributions to the agency.

The Smarr-Smith Foundation was incorporated in 2017 following the murders of Officers Nick Smarr and Jody Smith on December 7th, 2016. The foundation provides funding for scholarships at our two local colleges and also provides money to local law enforcement agencies for training and equipment. As of the end of 2022 the Foundation has given over \$144,000 in grants to local law enforcement agencies and given over \$36,000 in scholarship funding to Georgia Southwestern State University and South Georgia Technical College.



Unfortunately, due to pandemic restrictions, the Annual Paint the Town Blue Gala had to be cancelled in 2020 and 2021. However, the gala returned in 2022 bigger and better than ever. Thanks to the generous donations of our community partners, the foundation was able to purchase new handguns and holsters for the entire police department.

<https://www.smarrsmithfoundation.com/>.

Donations can also be made continually each time you make a purchase on Amazon.com through Amazon Smile. By using Amazon Smile, a portion of every qualified purchase will go to the charity of your choice at no additional cost to you. For information on how to sign up, go to:

smile.amazon.com

<https://www.aboutamazon.com/news/community/how-to-sign-up-for-amazonsmile>

Be sure to designate The Smarr Smith Foundation as your charity of choice.

We Do Not Forget



Employee of the Year

Sgt. Eric English was selected as our Employee of the Year for 2022. He was recognized for his hard work by being selected as Employee of the Month in November of 2022 and selected as Employee of the Year by his peers. Sgt. English currently serves as the Department Training Officer, Accreditation/Certification Manager, Professional Standards Officer and assists with Criminal Investigations.

Public Safety Memorial

The City of Americus in partnership with the Americus Junior Service League designed and built a Public Safety Memorial in front of the Russell Thomas Public Safety Building. The monument commemorates all those public safety officers who have given their lives in service to their community and is dedicated to all the men and women of Sumter County who serve as Law Enforcement Officers, Firefighters and Emergency Medical Technicians. It was dedicated on December 7th, 2021. The eternal flame was installed in the summer of 2022.

