

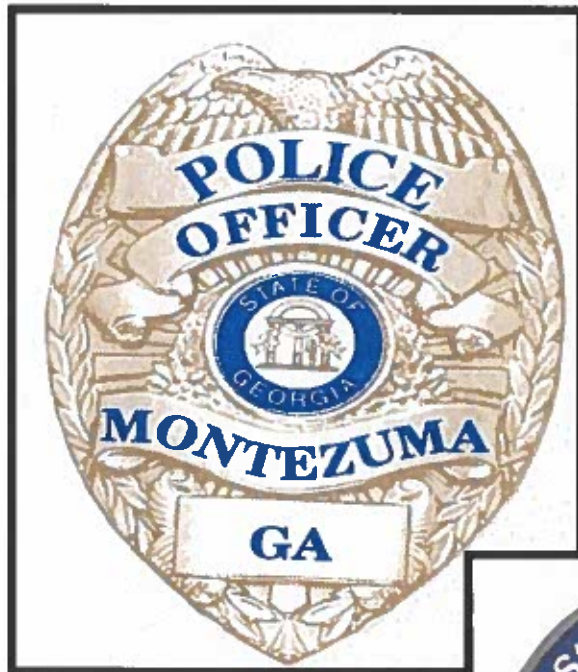
# **MONTEZUMA**

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## **POLICE DEPARTMENT**

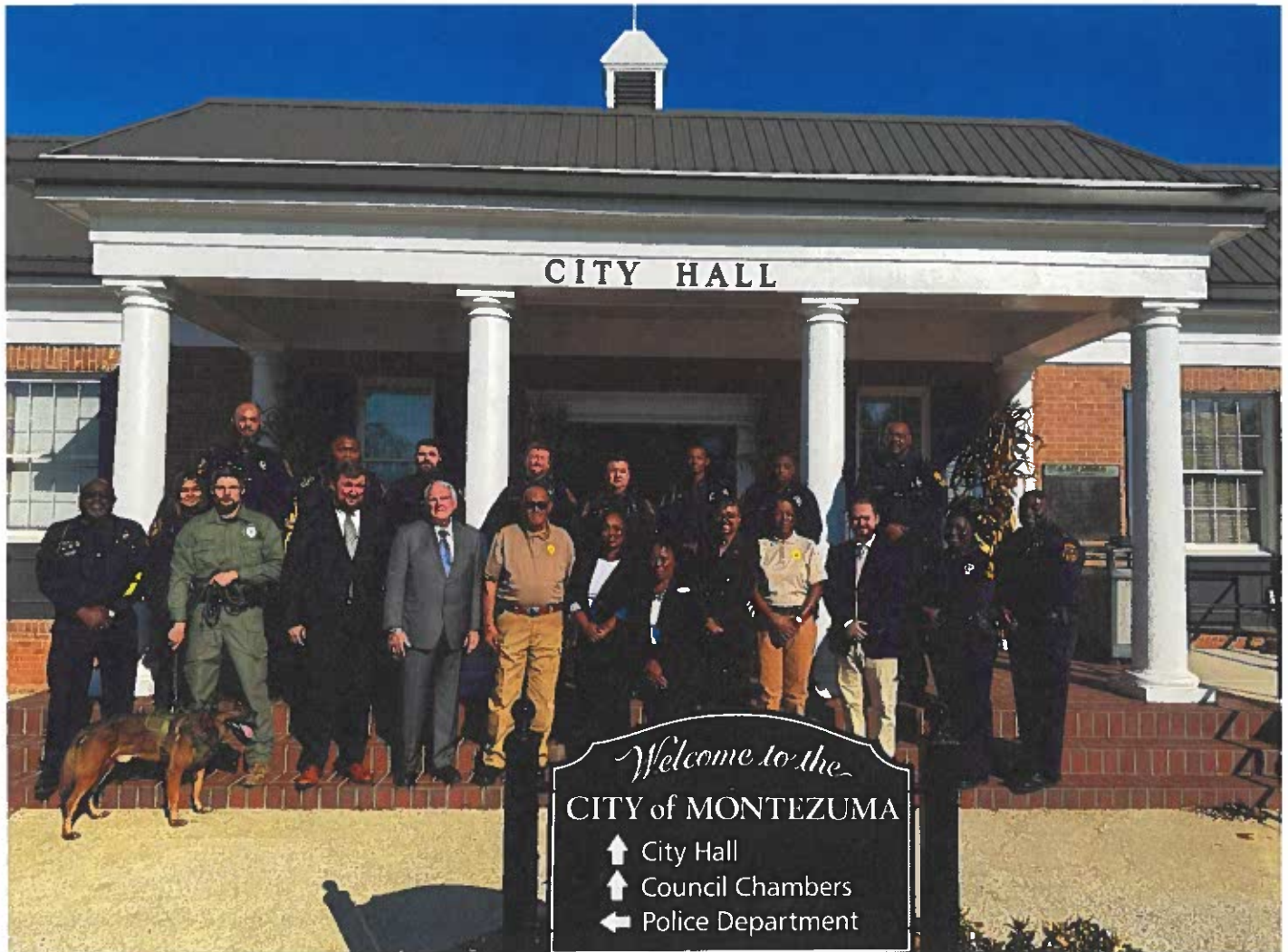
2023 Annual Report

*Eric R. Finch MPA, Chief of Police*



# *Montezuma Police Department 2023*

*"Setting the Pace...For Today's Law Enforcement."*



Presented by  
Eric R. Finch, Chief of Police



*Greetings!*

*On behalf of the Montezuma Police Department and the entire City of Montezuma, it is my pleasure to welcome you into our City and into a partnership that can benefit both of us.*

*Our motto, “Setting the Pace...For Today’s Law Enforcement” Summarizes our determination to give you the most modern, well-trained, best equipped police department possible. The slogan, “Together-we can make a difference” emphasizes our commitment to work with our citizens, businesses and visitors to combat crime and cooperate on issues involving public safety. Our pro-active stance on problem solving allows us many times, to avoid situations which would lead to property loss, damage or personal injury.*

**The mission of the Montezuma Police Department is to:**

- **Determine and Apprehend Criminals**
- **Maintain strong police-community relations**
- **To continually enhance the training and expertise of each member of the police force**

*At the Montezuma Police Department we stand ready, willing and able to assist you or your family in any way possible. We encourage you to get to know our citizens and other City employees and look forward to a long and continuous partnership.*

*Sincerely,*

*Eric R. Finch, Sr.*

*Eric R. Finch, Sr.  
Chief of Police*

# OVERVIEW OF MONTEZUMA POLICE DEPARTMENT

Currently, the Montezuma Police Department consists of 15 full-time employees and 15 part-time employees for a total of 27 employees. The Montezuma Police Department is made up of the following employees which handles the day to day operation for the department:

- ✚ 1 Chief of Police
- ✚ 1 Captain
- ✚ 4 Supervision Certification/FTO
- ✚ 1 Field Training Officers Certification
- ✚ 1 Child Abuse Investigator
- ✚ 1 K-9 Position
- ✚ 4 Officers
- ✚ 4 Part-Time Officer
- ✚ 2 School Crossing Guard
- ✚ 1 Records Manager/Certification Manager
- ✚ 1 Municipal Clerk
- ✚ 1 Administrative Assistant
- ✚ 1 Police Chaplain
- ✚ 1 Judge
- ✚ 1 Solicitor
- ✚ 1 Probation Officer
- ✚ 1 Indigent Attorney's

The Montezuma Police Department has proud itself as becoming a self-sufficient department and depends mainly upon itself to solve most of the crime with the City of Montezuma. Member of the Montezuma Police Department officers has 50 different types of degrees/certification to achieve the above task. They consist of the following:

- ✚ 1 Georgia Command College Graduate
- ✚ 1 Professional Management Graduate
- ✚ 1 Executive Management Graduate
- ✚ 1 Management Certification
- ✚ 1 Officer with a Master Degree
- ✚ 3 Officers with a Bachelor Degrees
- ✚ 9 Officers with Associate Degrees
- ✚ 2 POST Certified Instructors
- ✚ 1 Firearm Instructor
- ✚ 1 Certified Clerk of Courts
- ✚ 1 Sexual Offender Investigator
- ✚ 1 Certified K-9 Handler
- ✚ 2 Certification Managers
- ✚ 11 radar operators
- ✚ 6 Supervision Certification
- ✚ 2 Immediate Certification
- ✚ 4 Certified SWAT Member
- ✚ 1 GCIC TAC Officer
- ✚ 1 Certified Police Chaplain



***Officer of Year Awarded to  
Officer in Charge David Jennings***



***OIC David Jennings*** has been selected Officer of the Year 2023. OIC Jennings has been employed with the City of Montezuma since March 3, 2020. He graduated from the Georgia Public Training Center in Macon, Georgia on September 30, 1996 and have a Bachelor Degree from Columbus State University. OIC Jennings currently serves as the Evidence Custodian for the Montezuma Police Department and Oglethorpe Police Departments. In that period of time, OIC Jennings reorganized both evidence rooms/prepare evidence to be sent to the Georgia Crime Lab. Furthermore, he is a Field Training Officer who is very detail and has truly distinguished himself as a true leader and received the respect and admiration of his peers, supervisors, and the citizens of the City of Montezuma. In addition, he serves as a Shift Supervisors and his shift is mainly made up of the rookies within the department.

## *Montezuma Police Department K-9 Program*

*The Montezuma Police Department was awarded a grant through the Flint Energy Corporation for \$5,000.00. The Montezuma Police Department was able to buy a drug dog named "Pucky". "Pucky" is a State and Nationally Certified K-9. Since the program has been implemented, the Montezuma Police Department has filed on \$170,000.00 worth of properties and cash. "Pucky" has been invited to speak at several churches, schools, programs, and the Beaver Creek Festival. "Pucky" has been very instrumental in assisting other agencies with drug investigations. The Montezuma Police Department was able to purchase a Special Response/Command Vehicle through this program. Currently, our K9 Officer is Steven Polkinghorn. K9 Officer Polkinghorn and "Pucky" completed the Georgia Canine Academy in Dooly County, Georgia.*



# *"K9 Pucky"*

### ***State Certification***

The Montezuma Police Department was awarded State Certification on February 15, 2005. The Department now serves as a model for smaller law enforcement agencies seeking certification. The department has two Certification Managers and two State Assessors. The department was recertified on July 1, 2009, 2012, 2016, 2019 and 2022. The Montezuma Police Department is one of 141 police and sheriff departments certified out of 750 in the State of Georgia.

### ***E-911***

The Montezuma Police Department was the driving agency to help open the Middle Flint Regional E-911 Center in Ellaville, Georgia. The center is the largest E-911 Center in the Southeastern United States. The E-911 center serves seven counties. The Middle Flint Regional E-911 Center has been awarded several communication awards. The E-911 Center serves 9 counties, Schley, Sumter, Macon, Dooly, Marion, Webster, Stewart, Taylor and Talbot.

### ***Patrol Division***

The Montezuma Police Department is responsible for patrolling the streets of Montezuma and responded to 10,306 calls for service. The Montezuma Police Department responded to 385 incidents, 77 accidents, 256 miscellaneous calls, 189 arrests, 2,497 traffic stops and 2,053 citations.

### ***Training Division***

The Montezuma Police Department provided training for over forty (30) different law enforcement agencies during the year of 2023. The Montezuma Police Department is known throughout the State of Georgia as a premiere agency within the State of Georgia with excellent police policies and training. Our instructors teach on Federal, State and Local levels.



## ***Upgrades in the Department***

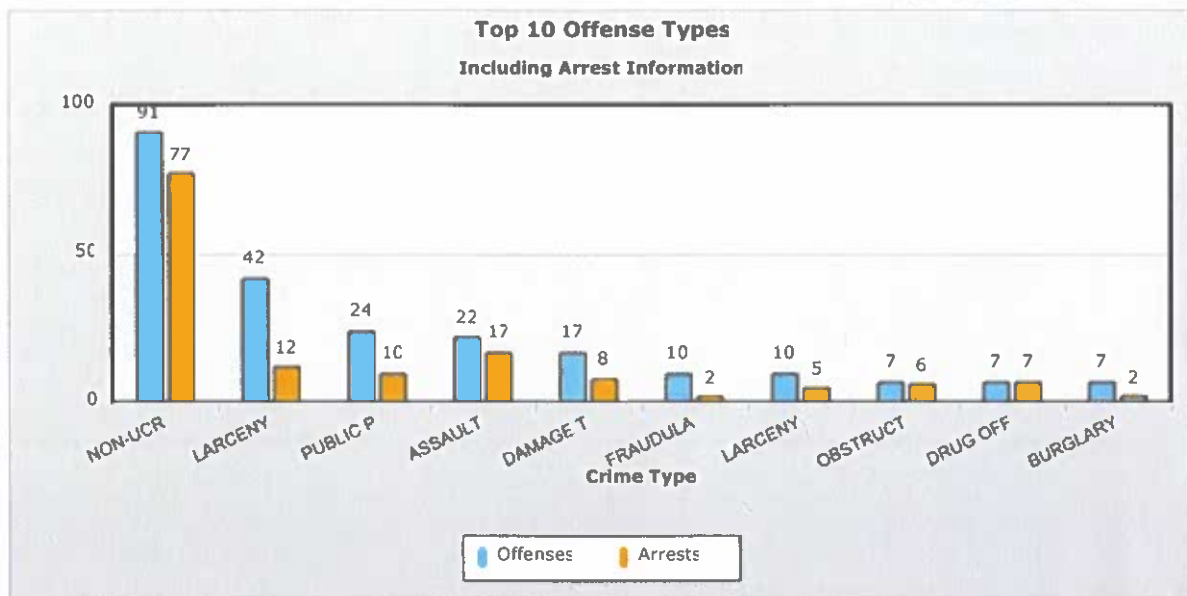
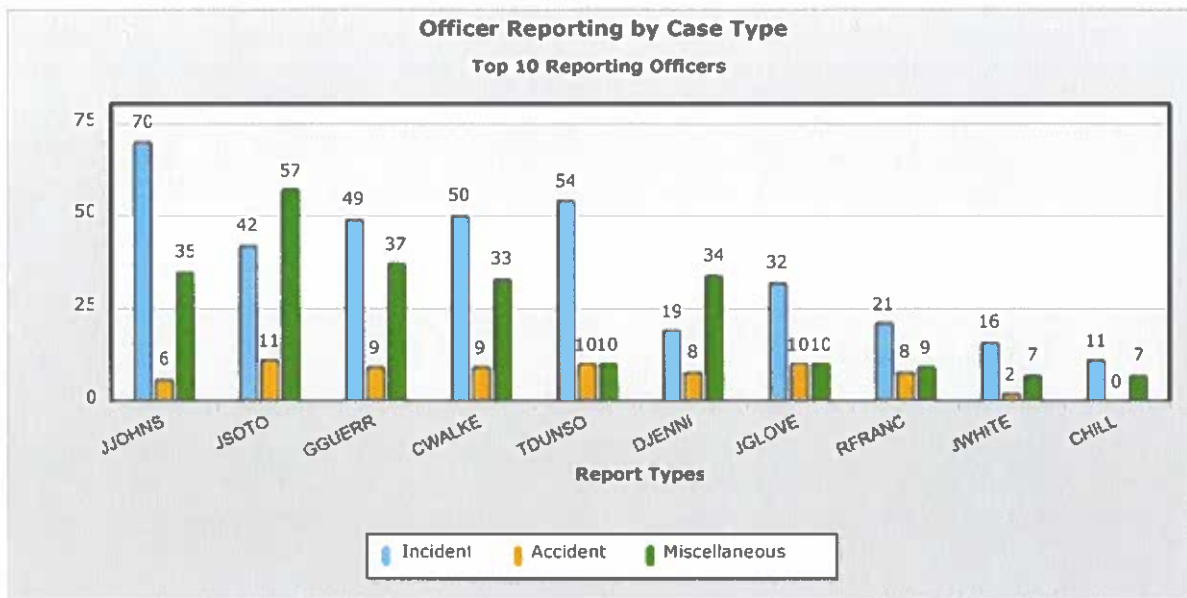
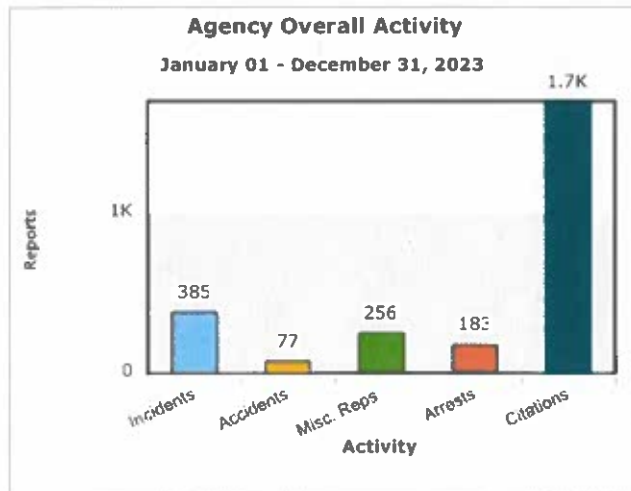
- ❖ Convenience of paying tickets on-line ([www.montezumatix.com](http://www.montezumatix.com))
- ❖ New standard operating procedure manual was developed.
- ❖ PowerMDS Management Data System
- ❖ Courtroom security
- ❖ New filing system in records
- ❖ Yearly training on domestic violence, firearm, vehicle pursuit, use of force, legislature update.
- ❖ Conducting follow-up investigations.
- ❖ Establish hiring and promotion policies.
- ❖ Computerized and Modernized Patrol Cars
- ❖ National and State Certified K-9 Program
- ❖ Computerized Evidence Room
- ❖ Crime mapping Program
- ❖ Text messaging briefings of shifts to all police personnel daily
- ❖ Establish the Boys and Girls Club in June 2, 2014
- ❖ Added 32 Flock Cameras around the City
- ❖ Community with Cops
- ❖ Chief's Diploma Program
- ❖ Added a Special Response Vehicle
- ❖ Added Speed Detection Trailers around the Community
- ❖ Facial Recognition Software
- ❖ Remolded the Montezuma Police Department



## Flock Cameras



32 Flock Cameras were installed at all entry points in the City of Montezuma



Built by Courtware/RareElement Solutions

Crime Statistics Report  
Reporting Month: December

Part 1 Crime Statistics

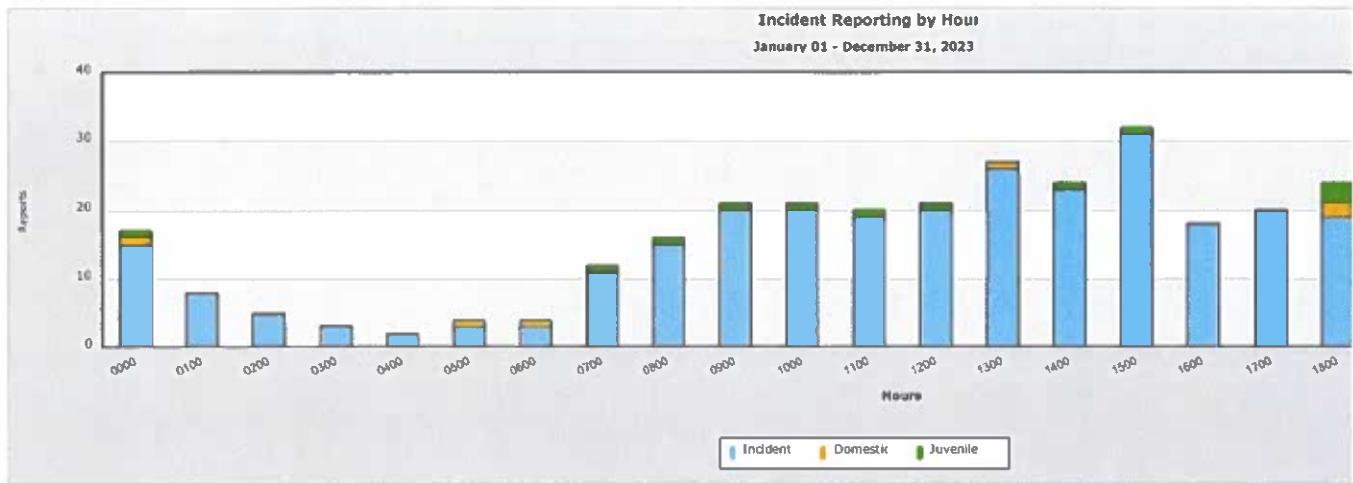
Incident Type	December 2022	December 2023	Percent Change	Year to Date 2022	Year to Date 2023	Year to Date Percent Change
Homicide						
Rape				1	1	
Robbery					3	100.00%
Aggravated Assault				11	9	-18.18%
Burglary	3		-100.00%	15	5	-66.67%
Larceny	4		-100.00%	43	56	30.23%
Vehicle Theft	1		-100.00%	3	3	
Arson				1	1	
TOTAL	8		-100.00%	74	78	5.41%

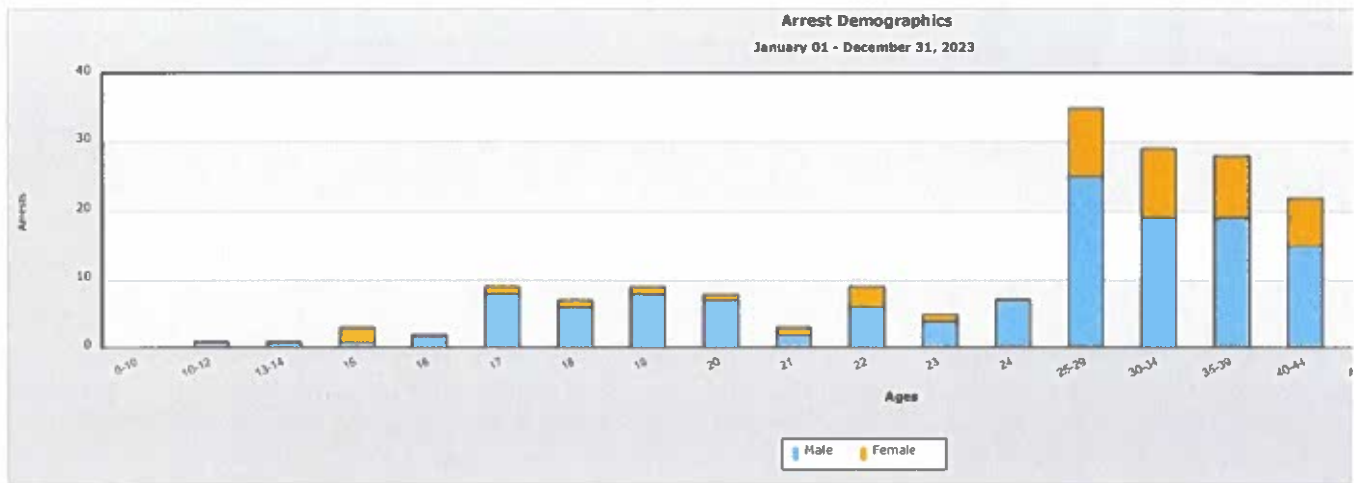
Part 2 Crime Statistics

Incident Type	December 2022	December 2023	Percent Change	Year to Date 2022	Year to Date 2023	Year to Date Percent Change
Other Assaults	2		-100.00%	36	35	-2.78%
Forgery/Counterfeiting	1		-100.00%	3	6	100.00%
Fraud				7	17	142.86%
Embezzlement						
Stolen Property				7	6	-14.29%
Vandalism	6		-100.00%	61	50	-18.03%
Weapons	1		-100.00%	12	17	41.67%
Prostitution						
Other Sex Offenses				3	2	-33.33%
Narcotics Total	5		-100.00%	51	35	-31.37%
Gambling Total						
Family/Children				20	17	-15.00%
DUI					3	100.00%
Liquor Laws				2		-100.00%
Disorderly Conduct				27	28	3.70%
Other						
TOTAL	15		-100.00%	229	216	-5.68%

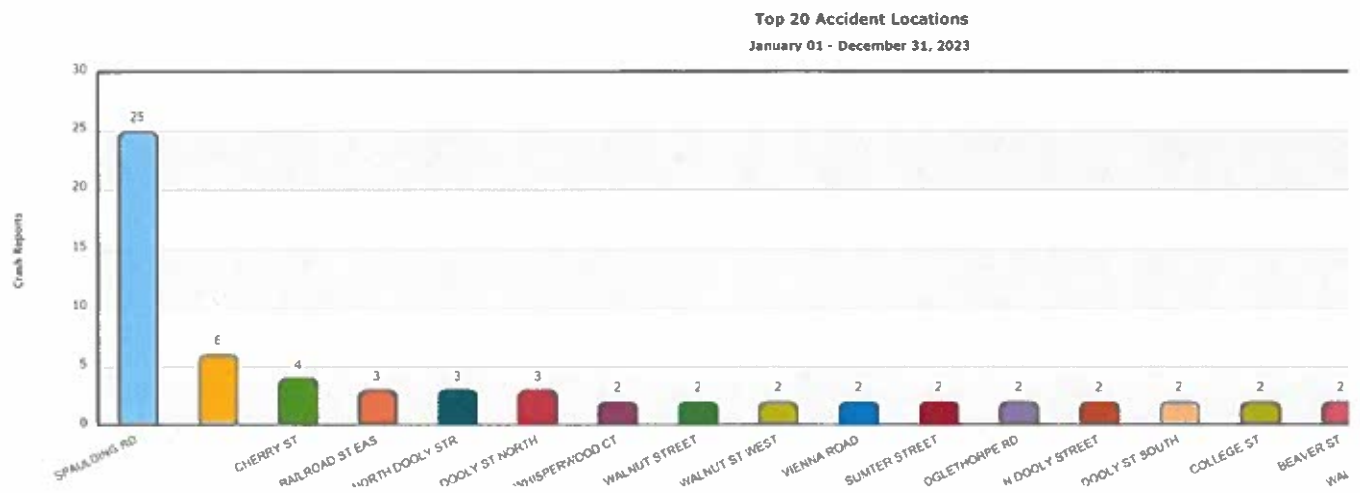
Arrests

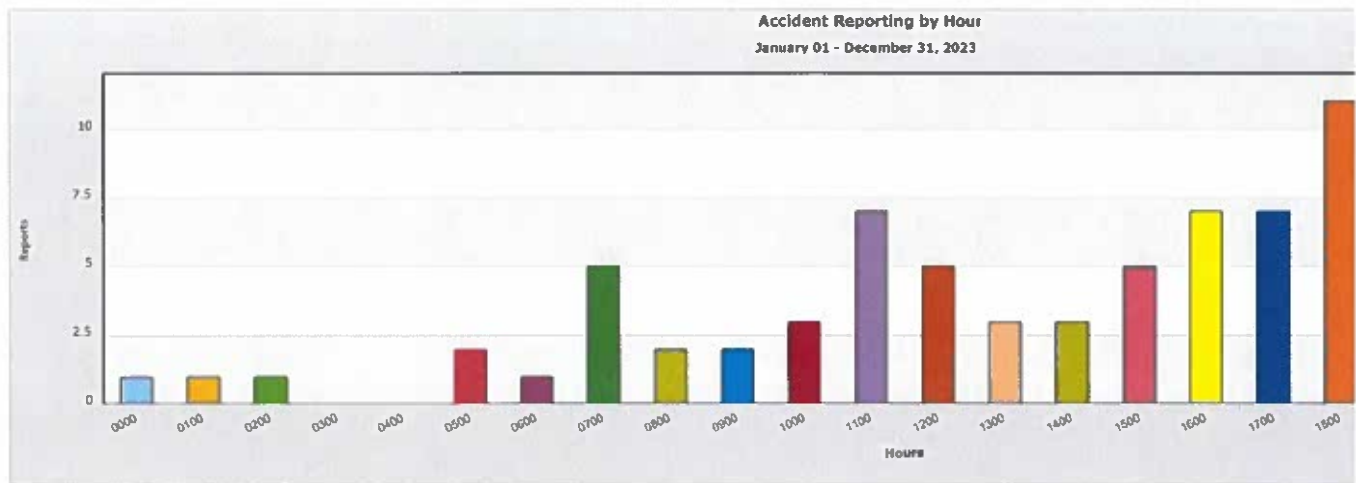
Demographics	December 2022	December 2023	Percent Change	Year to Date 2022	Year to Date 2023	Year to Date Percent Change
Adults	17		-100.00%	229	211	-7.86%
Juveniles				15	7	-53.33%
TOTAL	17		-100.00%	244	218	-10.66%
Total Criminal Offenses						
Total Non-Criminal Offenses						
Total Calls for Service						













# ROBBERY PREVENTION

We have all been told at one time or another to take a moment out of our hectic schedules to enjoy the small things around us...the sunset...dew on the grass...a child's smile...a loved one's laughter...and of course the sight and smell of beautiful roses. Paying attention to our surrounding is also a key element in robbery prevention.

- ✓ Be aware of your surroundings and the people around you. Criminals count on you being preoccupied with shopping, banking or getting in/out of your vehicle instead of paying attention to them. Take a moment to observe who is in the parking area or close to the building before you exit your car. Does it make sense to walk past someone just standing around?
- ✓ If the area is dark, you can't see if someone is hiding behind shrubbery, trees or other obstructions. At home install additional exterior lighting and keep shrubbery at windowsill level and trees trimmed to prevent hiding places. Speak with management about inadequate lighting or overgrown shrubbery around your apartment or businesses that you frequent.
- ✓ While walking, do not take short cuts through wooded or isolated areas, alleys, and dark, poorly lit areas. Plan your route. If the area is unfamiliar to you, consider walking with a friend or traveling by car. If approached by a stranger, maintain the distance of an arm's length. Project a no-nonsense attitude and quickly walk away. Move with confidence and stay alert!
- ✓ If you think you are being followed, cross the street, walk quickly or run to a busy store, restaurant, gas station or lighted house.
- ✓ If a car is following you, turn and run in the opposite direction. If you suspect that you are being followed while driving, don't drive home!
- ✓ Go to the nearest police station, fire station, or business. Blow your horn to draw attention to your vehicle while driving up to the location.
- ✓ Nothing that you carry in your purse or wallet is worth your life! If robbed, stay calm and don't resist!
- ✓ Get a good description of the attacker call the police immediately.

# BURGLARY PREVENTION

Burglars go through neighborhoods looking for easy targets. During the day they see uncut lawns, stuffed mailboxes, newspapers piled up, and valuable items. These conditions act as clues to burglars that "this home" is an easy target. At night they see darkened houses or ones with the same light on for the same length of time every night. Again these are signals to burglars that "this house" is an easy target. The best way to stop the crime of burglary is through prevention. The following tips are basic to help you prevent crime in your neighborhood and to reduce the chance that the crime of burglary will effect you.

- ***Don't be a temptation to a thief*** - Put lawn equipment, bikes, grills, and garden tools away. Never leave a note saying you are gone on the door.
- ***Locks*** - Get the Best. No lock is 100% burglar proof, get advice from a locksmith to find the best fit for your house. Change locks if you lose your keys
- ***Outside the house*** - Have adequate lighting, trim trees and shrubs to prevent burglar from hiding in your yard or breaking in without being seen
- ***Windows*** - Most windows can be pinned for security. Some windows come with security locks, USE THEM!
- ***Alarms*** - An alarm system is an excellent way to have home security as it provides peace of mind, especially while you are away from home.

Remember, if you are going to be out of town take advantage of the Montezuma Police Department's free house check service. To activate a house check call the police department before you leave and request a house check. Officers patrolling your zone will monitor your residence while you are away.





## SENIORS BEWARE!



**There are dishonest people pretending to be Social Workers, agency or church volunteers so that they can get inside your home and steal your personal information, credit cards, money and other valuables. Please follow these simple tips:**

- 🔑 Do not let strangers in your home!
- 🔑 Don't judge a book by its cover – well dressed people commit crimes and so do women!
- 🔑 If you have not called or signed up for social services, free groceries or medical attention, do not let a stranger convince you that you need their services.
- 🔑 If you have called for services, check the person's identification before they enter your home. Ask them to press the ID card against the window or slide it under the door.
- 🔑 **DO NOT TRUST A CHAIN LOCK; IT CAN BE EASILY BROKEN WITH ENOUGH FORCE!**
- 🔑 Never let anyone know that you live alone or are at home alone.
- 🔑 As soon as a stranger appears, call a trusted neighbor and ask them to watch your home. Remain on the phone with them, until the stranger leaves.
- 🔑 **WHEN IN DOUBT, CALL 911**

### 🔑 **These are some of the latest scams:**

- 🔑 A woman states that she is a Social Worker and needs to give you a hearing test.
- 🔑 When you turn away from her, she grabs your valuables or you discover items missing after she has left.
- 🔑 A woman pretending to be a church or charity worker brings you a box of free groceries and steals your valuables. When you open your purse to show her some identification, she grabs your purse and runs out of the door.

- 🚨 Remember, these scams can involve criminals from different races and they can be a male or female working alone or as a team.

## **VEHICLE SAFETY**

So you've finally found a parking place for your car,  
but did you remember to...

- ✓ Remove all valuables from the seats and/or floor area BEFORE arriving at your destination?
- ✓ Avoid parking on deserted street?
- ✓ Report suspicious activities to the police or parking attendant?
- ✓ Check your vehicle/tag when you return?

### **HAVE YOU CHECKED YOUR TAG/DECAL LATELY?**



**Many criminals count on you never noticing that your decal or tag is missing, until they have left the scene.**

- ✓ When was the last time you actually walked around your vehicle to check your tag/decal? Most people can honestly say “almost never”,

- ✓ Checking the exterior of your vehicle should be a part of your daily routine, whether your car is parked in your driveway or in a parking lot!
- ✓ Running into the gas station or the store for a moment? Check your tag when you return to your vehicle.
- ✓ Do you know your tag and/or decal number? You should carry the information in your wallet for a quick reference.

My tag # is \_\_\_\_\_

My decal # is \_\_\_\_\_

## **NEIGHBORHOOD WATCH**

### **ARE YOU IN A GOOD NEIGHBORHOOD?**

Being a good neighbor is the primary reason that neighborhood watch programs work!

**Good neighbors** concerned about that delivery man or a unfamiliar car driving slowly through the neighborhood will stop and take notice.

**Good neighbors** meet their neighbors and exchange vital information for emergency purposes.

### **The Neighborhood Watch Program...**

**W**orks! It strengthens the relationship between the community and the police, while providing a cost effective method to reduce crime!

**A** daily part of neighborhood living, not a series of meetings. The basic premise of the watch program is: You watch my house and I will watch your house.

**T**eaches the resident about proactive strategies and techniques in the fight against crime.

**C**reates an awareness among residents to assist in the prevention of criminal activity in their communities.

**H**elps build community pride and provides the mechanism for residents to address other neighborhood concerns.

# CHURCH SAFETY



We hear the phrase often about the “good old days”...One of the things that is definitely different today are incidents of crimes involving churches. We encourage you to take proactive steps to reduce the opportunities for criminal encounters to occur on your church grounds.

## Exterior Security:

- ✚ Install additional lighting in parking lots and entryways if areas are poorly lit.
- ✚ To prevent hiding places, keep the shrubbery trimmed away from doors and windows.
- ✚ Install solid wood or sheet metal faced doors.
- ✚ Check all windows for defective locking devices for replacement or repair.

## Key Control:

- ✚ Maintain an accurate key distribution list and check with the recipients periodically to identify lost or stolen keys.
- ✚ Consider changing locks every 3-5 years and reissue keys.
- ✚ Create a User Form to track who is in the church and list the responsible key holder. Ideally, one person should open and close the church to eliminate the need for excessive keys being distributed.

## Church Safety Team:

- ✚ Ask neighborhood residents and businesses to join you in establishing a community watch.
- ✚ Form a safety team to assess the overall security of the church (call Chief Eric Finch)
- ✚ Designate safety monitors to check on the church periodically.



# HOME/NEIGHBORHOOD SAFETY

Over 2,000,000 home burglaries are reported in the United States each year.



Every 13 seconds a home is broken into. Things to do if it happens

Listen to everything the intruder is saying. How many voices are there? Which directions are they going?

Hide in a room, lock the door, barricade it if you can. If your chest has a lock on it, go in there. Take anything heavy with you and don't hesitate to use it.

Be quiet! Don't make a sound. Most home invasion murders occur in the first 30 seconds, so how you handle the situation can change everything.

Use your cell phone and call 911. You must know your address. That's why it's important to keep your phone charged and in your room when you go to sleep.

If you think you can get out of your home safely, go. If not, stay quiet until help arrives.

## Recreational and Home Safety

Seniors need to be aware of the everyday dangers related to homes:



### Poisoning:

Keep all cleaning supplies locked away. Install and maintain carbon monoxide alarms. Carbon monoxide is an odorless, colorless gas that contributes to more than 2,000 deaths yearly.

**Burns:** The most common causes of burns is from scalds, fire, electricity, chemicals and overexposure to the sun. Never leave boiling water on the stove. Always check the heat of

food before eating, and check how hot the bath water is before you bathe. Always wear sunscreen.

**Falls:** One in three adults age

65 and older fall a year causing moderate injuries to death. Help prevent falls by exercising, check medicines that make you dizzy, have your eyes checked regularly and make your home safer by adding grab bars inside and outside the tub. Also, add grab bars at stairways and improve your lighting.

Learn how to make your home safe inside and outside.

### Burglary Prevention Tips

- **DETER** - Use of Operation ID decals on the windows allows would be burglars to know that property in the residence has been marked for identification. Use of
- lights in easily accessible areas of your yard after dark.
- **DENY** - Place your valuables in a secure location, such as safe or security closet.
- **DELAY** - Install key-locking latches on windows and doors.
- **DETECT** - Install an alarm system. Join a Neighborhood Watch Program.
- **DECEIVE** - Place automatic timers on lights. When traveling have neighbors pick up your mail. Have the lawn mowed to maintain



# Neighbors Help Each Other

Why should you get to know your neighbors? You're too busy, you have enough friends already, or there's not enough time in your day to develop a new relationship, right? But your neighbors can be your best crime preventer. They may notice a strange car passing slowly up and down the street. They may hear your car alarm go off, your dog barking non-stop or notice your door wide open when they know you're at work. They may be the first ones to call the police. A fast response is key to stopping or solving a crime, so that's why it's good to get to know your neighbors. Start out by saying hi, or wave to your neighbors. A simple hello can lead you to feeling safer in your home. Join the neighborhood watch program if they offer one. If they don't have a program, organize one yourself.

## Organizing a Neighborhood Watch Program

Neighborhood Watch Programs started over 40 years ago due to the increase of crime. Today, there are over 20,000 Neighborhood Watch Programs. The sizes of the programs range from covering a couple of homes to protecting thousands of residents. They can be initiated by either law enforcement or the public.

Below are the basic steps to establishing a Neighborhood Watch Program:

- 1) Call your local police/sheriff offices and ask if there is a local program in your neighborhood already. If not, ask if an officer or deputy could attend your meeting.
- 2) Pass out flyers to your neighbors letting them know where and when the meeting will be held.
- 3) Place a sign in your yard the morning of the meeting reminding everyone about the meeting.
- 4) During the meeting have everyone write down their information.
- 5) Have the police officer/deputy speak about the Neighborhood Watch Program.
- 6) Keep your program active by having two meetings per year and maybe a block party.

Visit: [USAonWatch.org](http://USAonWatch.org) where you may print out further information.



# Recognizing Suspicious Persons

Not every "stranger" who comes into your neighborhood is a criminal, but often criminals disguise themselves as repair people or legitimate door to door salesmen, so it's important to be alert to their activities. These are examples of incidents that **MAY** indicate possible criminal activity:

- Persons going door to door, especially if one or more persons goes to the rear of the residence or closed business.
- Person forcing entry into a residence or closed business.
- Heavy traffic to and from residence.
- Persons running through neighborhood. (non residents)
- Persons loitering in neighborhood or looking into parked vehicles.
- Persons attempting to sell items at extremely low prices.

# Recognizing Suspicious Vehicles

These are examples of incidents that **MAY** indicate possible criminal activity:

- Slow moving, without lights on. (casing the neighborhood)
- Parked or occupied vehicles.
- Abandoned vehicles. (possible stolen vehicle)
- Business transactions taking place. (drive up drug sales)
- Non-resident vehicle driving through neighborhood.
- Occupied parked vehicles near playgrounds/parks. (potential sex offender, or drug pusher)

# Recognizing Suspicious Activity

Be Alert! Anything that seems out of place or is occurring at an unusual time of day/night could be criminal activity. These are examples of incidents that **MAY** indicate possible criminal activity:

- Continuous repair operations at a residence could indicate stolen property being altered. (Vehicle chop shop)
- Opened doors or broken windows at closed businesses or unoccupied residences.
- Unusual noises (barking dogs, beating/banging, glass breaking, screaming, etc) could indicate a burglary in progress, prowler, assault, or other crime.

# *Protecting Your Home*

- Appearance of Occupancy - timers on lights, TV, radio, etc.
- House Numbers - make sure that police, fire and EMS can find your home in the event of an emergency.
- Exterior Lighting - is extremely important for residential security. Each doorway should be lit to prevent a burglar from concealing his activities. Use of ornamental yard and porch lights are a means of eliminating blind spots without compromising the appearance of your landscape.
- Landscaping - keep doorways, windows and porches clear when planting bushes and flowers. remember that landscaping that gives YOU privacy gives a BURGLAR a place to hide.
- Fences and Gates - a fence with a locked gate can make entry more difficult and prevent the removal of large items.
- If you are going to be away let your neighbors know; provide them with contact information in case of an emergency.
- Stop your mail/paper delivery or have a neighbor pick it up while you're away.

# *Vehicle Safety Tips*

Auto theft and auto burglaries are most often crimes of opportunity. Vehicles are generally targeted if the keys have been left in them; the car is left running and unattended, or has valuables in plain view. The following are precautions you can take to prevent being victimized:

- NEVER leave your car running and unattended - even in your driveway.
- Always lock your vehicle.
- Keep all valuables out of sight if they must be left in the vehicle.
- Make sure you roll your windows up tightly.
- Do not hide spare keys on the vehicle.
- Always try to park in well lit areas.
- When walking to or entering your vehicle have your keys ready and be aware of your surroundings.
- If your vehicle is equipped with an alarm you can use the panic button to draw attention if you are confronted in a parking lot.
- Keep passenger doors locked at gas stations, a thief may steal passenger side valuables while you are preoccupied.
- Keep your vehicle in good running condition to avoid breaking down.
- If you must stop in an unfamiliar area, do so in a well lit well populated area.
- If you are confronted, comply with the offender, obtain a good description of the suspect and notice a direction of travel when they leave.



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## Reporting Scams or Frauds

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If you are a victim of a scam or fraud, report it. By reporting the crime, you are helping other would be victims. [STOPFRAUD.gov](http://STOPFRAUD.gov) has a list of companies where you can report the crime. Below is a list of some of the places to report to:

- Identity Theft: Federal Trade Commission (FTC) 877-FTC-HELP
- Email Address: For complaints about spam: [spam@uce.gov](mailto:spam@uce.gov)
- Commodities, Investment and Securities Fraud: U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC): Center for Complaints and Enforcement Tips: 800-732-0330 or [www.sec.gov/complaint.shtml](http://www.sec.gov/complaint.shtml)
- Mail Fraud: U.S. Postal Inspection Service (USPIS) 877-876-2455
- Mass Marketing/Telemarketing Fraud: Federal Trade Commission: 877-FTC-HELP
- Medicare Fraud: HHS Office of Inspector General 800-447-8477 or [www.oig.hhs.gov](http://www.oig.hhs.gov)
- Mortgage Fraud or Loan Scams: Federal Bureau of Investigation: 800-CALLFBI
- Abusive transaction Involving a Retirement Plan: Internal Revenue Service (IRS) 410-962-9547 (not toll-free) [tegeepsheltercoord@irs.gov](mailto:tegeepsheltercoord@irs.gov)
- Misuse of Social Security Number: US Social Security Administration (SSA) Fraud Hotline 800-269-0271
- AARP Foundation ElderWatch at 800-222-4444, option 2 to connect with AARP
- Check any company before you do business with: Better Business Bureau: [www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org)

Complaints help bring scam artists to justice and end their unfair business practices. If you have been scammed or you have spotted a scam, report it. The FTC is the nation's Consumer Protection Agency and they want to know about it. Let's put an end to scams.

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The Census Bureau is a form you must fill out for the government. If you don't you can be fined. By 2020 they will largely conducted the census forms using the Internet. The forms help allocated funds to communities across the country. If you receive one you can verify it is real by calling: 800-923-8282 or go online to: [ask.census.gov](http://ask.census.gov) or: <http://www.census.gov/regions/>.