

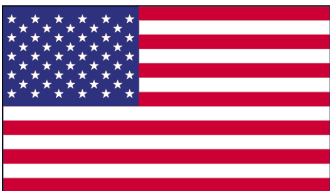


# LAWTEY POLICE

## CHIEF SHANE BENNETT



# Lawtey Police Department Term Report 2014-2018



*"You Matter"*



# LAWTEY POLICE

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### Chief's Message:



On January 7, 2014 I had the honor of being sworn in as the Chief of Police for the City of Lawtey. This was an historic event as I was the first new police chief for Lawtey in 52 years, having succeeded Guinness Book World Record holder and friend Chief Millard "Butch" Jordan. Chief Jordan spent five decades building a small town police department and my aim has been to move the agency to the next level of service. To be sure, the technological advancements of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, along with increased state and federal regulations, the public's expectation for services, funding challenges, and the era of instantaneous social media applications demands that police agencies, even in small towns, adapt to changing times.

The following report focuses on the many administrative and operational changes and improvements that I have implemented in the nearly 4 years since taking office. All of these changes are directed towards providing faster, better and consistent services and to keeping the citizens of Lawtey and our visitors safe. Since 2014 the Lawtey Police Department has upgraded and standardized equipment, implemented new policies and procedures to reflect modern policing practices, installed mobile data terminals (laptops) in patrol vehicles, conducted hundreds of hours of in-service training for officers, maximized grant and other funding opportunities, partnered with local agencies to combat illegal drugs, designed and maintained a department web page for added transparency, and involved itself in a wide range of community events and programs. Additionally, our police officers now have written position descriptions along with a clear mission statement and a set of core values that neither they, nor I, will waiver from.

I can say with pride that the Lawtey Police Department is a full service agency with the knowledge, resources and training to respond quickly and professionally to the needs of our constituents. Further, the police department is positioned to conduct quality investigations, to apply the law equally and fairly, and to keep the citizens of Lawtey safe. The Lawtey Police Department belongs to the people and I am grateful for their continued trust and confidence and honored to lead my hometown agency.

With Warm Regards,

*Shane Bennett*  
Chief of Police



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**Mission Statement:** The mission of the Lawtey Police Department is to provide public safety and to reduce crime through community partnerships and quality law enforcement services.



**Core Values:** All members of the Lawtey Police Department will abide by these core values:

- Integrity
- Professionalism
- Dedication
- Quality
- Accountability



**LPD Biased-Based Profiling Policy:** It is the policy of the Lawtey Police Department to protect the constitutional rights of all people, regardless of race, color, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, physical handicap or religion; and to treat each person with respect and dignity. While contacting persons in a variety of situations is not only routine, but also germane to law enforcement activities, this agency will not accept or tolerate bias-based profiling.



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### Command Staff



**Chief Shane Bennett:** Chief Bennett is the elected head of the Lawtey Police Department. As the top public safety official in the city, Chief Bennett is ultimately responsible for all administrative and operational components of the police department and for providing advice to the city council on public safety matters. Chief Bennett also has the duty under the city charter to attend all regular and special meetings of the city council and to enforce order at the direction of the presiding officer. Chief Bennett is responsible for submitting an annual budget, establishing and maintaining inter-agency agreements, and ensuring the laws of the State and Florida and the ordinances of the City of Lawtey are enforced fairly, equally, and consistently.



**Captain Nathan Blom:** Captain Blom is the second in command of the Lawtey Police Department and serves as the acting chief in the absence of the police chief. Captain Blom is responsible for the administrative functions of the police department to include training, officer certification, bi-annual submission of the Uniform Crime Report, purchasing, human resources, communications, and public records compliance. Additionally, Captain Blom assists the police chief in preparing and managing an annual budget and attends all city council meetings.



**Sergeant Michael Gillick:** Sergeant Gillick supervises all operational functions within the police department to include patrol, investigations, the arsenal, and fleet. Sergeant Gillick directly supervises all police officers and assists with special assignments as requested by the captain or police chief. Sergeant Gillick also works closely with line supervisors of other local law enforcement agencies to ensure the police department's mutual aid obligations are fulfilled.



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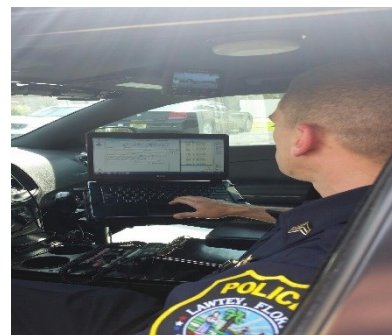
## CHIEF SHANE BENNETT

### Accomplishments 2014-2018:

During this term, the Lawtey Police Department made many upgrades, changes, and improvements to enhance the efficiency and capabilities of our services. Additionally, every effort was made to reduce cost when practical, and to utilize all available resources to fund operations, training, equipment, and other associated costs. Some of the major initiatives and accomplishments are:

**Technology:** In 2014 Chief Bennett began the process to modernize the police department to a computerized system. Mobile data terminals (laptops) were purchased for use in patrol vehicles and state of the art law enforcement software was installed to allow police officers to view calls, write reports, run tags and driver license, search for warrants, issue citations, complete full traffic crash reports with diagrams, get up to the minute information from dispatch, follow up on investigative leads, and send and receive e-mails and inter-agency messages, all without leaving their car. Additionally, the system includes Global Positioning Satellite (GPS) and mapping technology that allows dispatch to view and send the closest officer and provides the officer the most direct route by which to respond. Chief Bennett was able to secure a Memorandum of Understanding with the Bradford County Sheriff's Office (BCSO) and Smartcop Inc. to allow Lawtey Police Department to share the county server. This agreement mutually benefits both Lawtey and Bradford County as officers and investigators throughout the area are able to share reports, suspect information, crime trends and investigative leads.

In addition to the in-car computer systems, patrol vehicles were also equipped with camera and audio systems that record interactions between officers and citizens and are used not only for evidentiary purposes, but also for quality control, internal investigations, and training. These camera systems were purchased at no cost to the city through the police department's cooperation with the Florida Department of Transportation and the Law Enforcement Liaison program that sponsors annual traffic safety education and enforcement campaigns such as Click-it-or-ticket.



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**Standardized Equipment:** During this term the police department upgraded and standardized equipment. It is critical that law enforcement agencies maintain functioning equipment that all officers are familiar with. The department replaced older model Beretta 9mm and Sig Saur .45 caliber pistols with new Glock 22 .40 caliber models. The police department took advantage of trading in the outdated weapons for a credit that was then applied towards the special state contract price for the new pistols. The department also stopped the practice of allowing officers to use their personal weapons as their primary firearm. All primary side arms are now issued to the officer and remain the property of the Lawtey Police Department. Other standardized equipment includes first aid kits, computers, printers, handcuffs and Tasers.

In addition to the benefits officers get by being familiar with all equipment, standardization also allows cost savings for the police department. For example, rather than having to make separate purchases of different calibers of ammunition for training and on duty carry, the department now only has to purchase one type and can receive discount pricing.

**Communications:** In 2016, the Lawtey Police Department joined the Bradford County Sheriff's Office and the Starke Police Department (SPD) in replacing the outdated emergency services communication system that relied on the use of repeaters and old technology and contracted with a new 800 megahertz system known as State Law Enforcement Radio Service (SLERS). The new system reduces "dead spots" and also provides digital encryption technology. The police department obtained a rural development grant that paid for 55% of the cost associated with the in car and mobile radios along base chargers purchased. LPD coordinated closely with BCSO and SPD for installation of the new service. As part of the agreement reached, local agencies are no longer responsible for tower and other maintenance issues.



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**Chaplaincy Services:** In 2014 the Lawtey Police Department established a non-sworn agency chaplain's position. The Chaplain supports the police officers spiritually and is available for counseling and advise. The Chaplain also serves as the department's victim's advocate and responds in a non-denominational role to a variety of emergencies and crises to assist with comforting and coping as well as to guide victims through the criminal justice process.



**Impound Lot:** In cooperation with the Lawtey Maintenance Department, a section of city property adjacent to the maintenance yard was fenced to be used as an impound lot for seized or towed vehicles, message boards, generator lights, and other police department property.

**Restructured and realigned positions:** The police department restructured its organizational chart to flow from the police chief, to one captain, to one sergeant, to the officers. The ranks of major and lieutenant were removed and clear position descriptions were written.

**Policy and Procedures:** All department policies and procedures were revised and updated. Particular care was used to ensure high liability areas such as vehicle pursuits, use of force, and search and seizure policies reflect national standards and public safety concerns. The police chief constantly monitors statutes, case law, community standards and professional periodicals to keep the police department's policies and procedures legal and viable.

**Updated agency forms:** All department forms were updated and made available in electronic format. Everything from arrest reports, to inventory sheets, to the officer employment application was revised. Officers now have access to forms via their mobile data terminals and the public can access the employment application, complaint form and fund raising form all from the department web site.



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### Law Enforcement Operations:

The Lawtey Police Department exists to protect our citizens by providing quick, professional, and effective law enforcement services to our community. Law Enforcement Operations consists of patrol and investigative functions. Officers patrol the city streets, respond to calls, investigate crimes, and help people in a variety of situations, from unlocking cars to providing emergency first aid, to making arrests. According to Uniform Crime Reports (UCR) Lawtey consistently has one of the lowest crime rates of any city its size in the state.







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### Drug Enforcement:

Since 2014 the Lawtey Police Department has made drug enforcement a top priority. By taking a zero tolerance approach to illegal drugs, other crimes such as theft, burglary, trespassing, prostitution and criminal mischief also decline. From 2014-2017 drug related search warrants were served at 6 residences in the city. Seized narcotics include cocaine, marijuana, heroin, crystal meth, oxycodone, muscle relaxers, and various prescription medications.

A key component of the police department's anti-drug strategy has been to assign a full time Lawtey officer to the Bradford Drug Task Force (DTF). By partnering with BCSO and SPD, resources, drug agents, funding, and equipment are available that the city could not otherwise provide on its own. Additionally, DTF began targeted operations within the city that ultimately resulted in the arrest of 21 local drug dealers. In some cases, DTF operations inside Lawtey led to larger regional and inter-state investigations involving the Florida Department of Law Enforcement (FDLE) as well as the federal task force for the north Florida district.

Another strategy to combat illegal drugs in Lawtey centers on aggressive interdiction tactics on US 301 and CR 225. Officers receive training on interdiction practices to include legal concerns, driving patterns, behavioral indicators, concealment methods and questioning techniques. By using these skills, officers have been successful in seizing approximately 395 prescription pills, 86 grams of cocaine, 53 grams of methamphetamine, 28 grams of heroin, and 15 pounds of marijuana. Moreover, \$59,187 in U.S. currency along with 18 vehicles related to drug trafficking have been seized.





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### Traffic Enforcement:

The Lawtey Police Department takes a proactive approach to traffic enforcement and continues to have a remarkably successful traffic safety record. Indeed, while traffic related deaths in Florida rose by 21% from 2014 to 2016, Lawtey's averages remained low. Per the Florida Department of Transportation, approximately 17,000 cars per day travel through Lawtey on US 301. During the years 2014-2017 the City of Lawtey averaged only 15 crashes per year. Of those, only 1 involved a death or serious injury.

The police department accomplishes this by using a comprehensive traffic safety strategy that focuses on a combination of education, public safety ads, clear signage, visual presence, warnings and citations. In recent years, the police department has also participated in national traffic safety efforts such as click-it-or-ticket and the Florida Law Enforcement Challenge. Further, the police department has targeted impaired drivers and has received several awards during this period for DUI enforcement as well as being recognized by the Florida Department of Transportation for our overall traffic safety program.

Statistically, of the approximately 17,000 cars that pass through Lawtey each day, only 1/10<sup>th</sup> of 1 percent of motorist are issued a traffic citation. This means nearly 99.9% of Lawtey's daily traffic moves through the city without being stopped by police.







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### Training:

Training is an essential and continuous part of good law enforcement services. From 2014-2018, the Lawtey Police Department increased mandatory training for both its command staff and officers. In that period, Lawtey police officers received training in constitutional law, drug interdiction, active shooter, high profile traffic stops, domestic violence, elderly abuse, sex offenders, mentally ill persons, firearms, defensive tactics, report writing, narcotic's identification, cultural diversity, communications, crisis intervention and de-escalation. Additionally, police officers attend quarterly staff meetings where they are briefed on department policy and procedure for such things as use of force, vehicle pursuits, citizen encounters, sexual harassment and chain of command.

Some of the training highlights from 2014-2018 are below:

- Chief Bennett completed three advanced executive development courses: The FBI National Academy, Quantico, VA (2016); The Florida Executive Development Seminar, Amelia Island, FL (2015); and the FDLE Chief Executive Seminar, Tallahassee, FL (2014).
- Chief Bennett completed training through the Florida Police Chief's Association in: Community Policing; Crisis Management; Media Relations; Public Records Law; Human Resources; Public Budgeting; Officer Discipline.
- Lawtey Police Department went from 0 certified general instructors to 4.
- Lawtey Police Department went from 0 certified fire arms instructors to 3.
- Lawtey Police Department went from 0 certified defensive tactics instructors to 2.
- Lawtey Police Department hosted its first ever in house training events without relying on other agencies.
- All officers received training in constitutional law/rights.
- All officers became Taser certified and maintain annual re-certification.
- All officers became FCIC/NCIC certified.
- All officers received training in evidence collection and retention requirements.
- All officers received training in contraband forfeiture.





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### Inter-agency Partnerships and Agreements:

An important component of the Lawtey Police Department's public safety initiative is partnering with local, state and federal agencies in order to maximize limited resources and have backup plans in place for emergencies. These partnerships are mutually beneficial to each agency and are usually re-negotiated and updated annually. Currently, the Lawtey Police Department maintains formal Mutual Aid Agreements and Memorandums of Understanding with the Bradford County Sheriff's Office, the Starke Police Department, The Florida Department of Law Enforcement and the Florida Department of Corrections. Further, the Lawtey Police Department has informal partnerships with the Bradford County Emergency Management Department, the Federal Bureau of Investigations, the Florida Highway Patrol, and the Florida Department of Highway Safety and Motor Vehicles.

These agreements focus on many topics to include:

- Officer/ Deputy backup
- Inter-jurisdictional arrest powers
- Evidence Storage
- K-9 assistance
- Drug Task Force Operations
- Information Technology
- Statewide Officer Automated Training Management System (ATMS2)
- Child Abduction Assistance
- Driver License/ Warrants
- Natural and Environmental Disasters
- Traffic Crash Statistics
- Uniform Crime Reports







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### Florida Law Enforcement Liaison Program:

Under Chief Bennett, the Lawtey Police Department continues its partnership with the Florida Law Enforcement Liaison Program and participates in the various traffic safety educational and enforcement initiatives throughout the year. The program encourages police agencies around the state to help reduce traffic related fatalities and injuries by not only issuing citations to traffic violators, but by also educating motorists on the dangers of speeding, impaired driving, and not using seatbelts and child restraints when in motion in a vehicle. Several times a year the Liaison Program sponsors traffic safety campaigns such as "Click-it-or-Ticket" and "Drive Sober or get Pulled Over." During these campaigns, the Lawtey Police Department places traffic safety banners in the community, records radio ads, puts traffic safety information on social media, and issues warnings and citations when appropriate.

Due to the Lawtey Police Department's success with the Liaison Program, from 2014-2018 our agency was awarded nearly \$40,000 in equipment paid for by National Highway Safety Administration and Florida Department of Transportation grants. This equipment, which includes generator light towers, road barricades, breathalyzers, flashlights, in-car video/audio systems, traffic vests and more, is used by police officers to make the highways within our city safer.





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### Community Relations:

Public service and community involvement is at the core of the Lawtey Police Department's values. Under Chief Bennett's leadership, the police department has involved itself in public service efforts and community events aimed at not just Lawtey, but Bradford County as a whole. Each year the police department donates funds to charitable and community organizations, lends equipment for public events, volunteers time, and assists with a wide range of community related functions.

Chief Bennett believes in leading by example and maintains a very active community service schedule. Chief Bennett serves his community in the following roles:

- Mentor, Communities in Schools
- Kiwanis of Starke, Board of Directors
- Bradford County Tourism and Development Council
- Santa Fe College Institute of Public Safety Advisory Committee

Additionally, Chief Bennett leads the police department's participation in local events such as:

- Lawtey Elementary School Fall Festival
- Lawtey Christmas Parade
- Lawtey Spring Festival
- Bradford Education Foundation Back to School Events
- Trunk or Treat
- Starke Christmas Parade
- Shop with a Cop



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### Agency Transparency and Public Access:

It is the philosophy of the Lawtey Police Department that public trust is essential to policing a free and democratic society. Therefore, transparency and public access are imperative. Since taking office, Chief Bennett has directed that the police department be as open and transparent as possible and that all public records requests, citizen complaints, and media inquiry's be promptly and fully addressed.

In 2014, the Lawtey Police Department designed its first ever official web page. By visiting [www.lawteypolice.org](http://www.lawteypolice.org) the public can obtain information on the police department, the police chief, the command staff, and can access agency contact information to include telephone, address and e-mail. Further, the public can download complaint forms, employment applications and fund raising information, as well as view links to other online services and local public agencies. By clicking on the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) link, the public can get quick answers to such issues as how to pay a traffic citation or how to obtain a concealed weapons permit.

During the same period, Captain Blom began operating a community Facebook page that keeps the public informed on happenings within the city, public safety notices, and community events.



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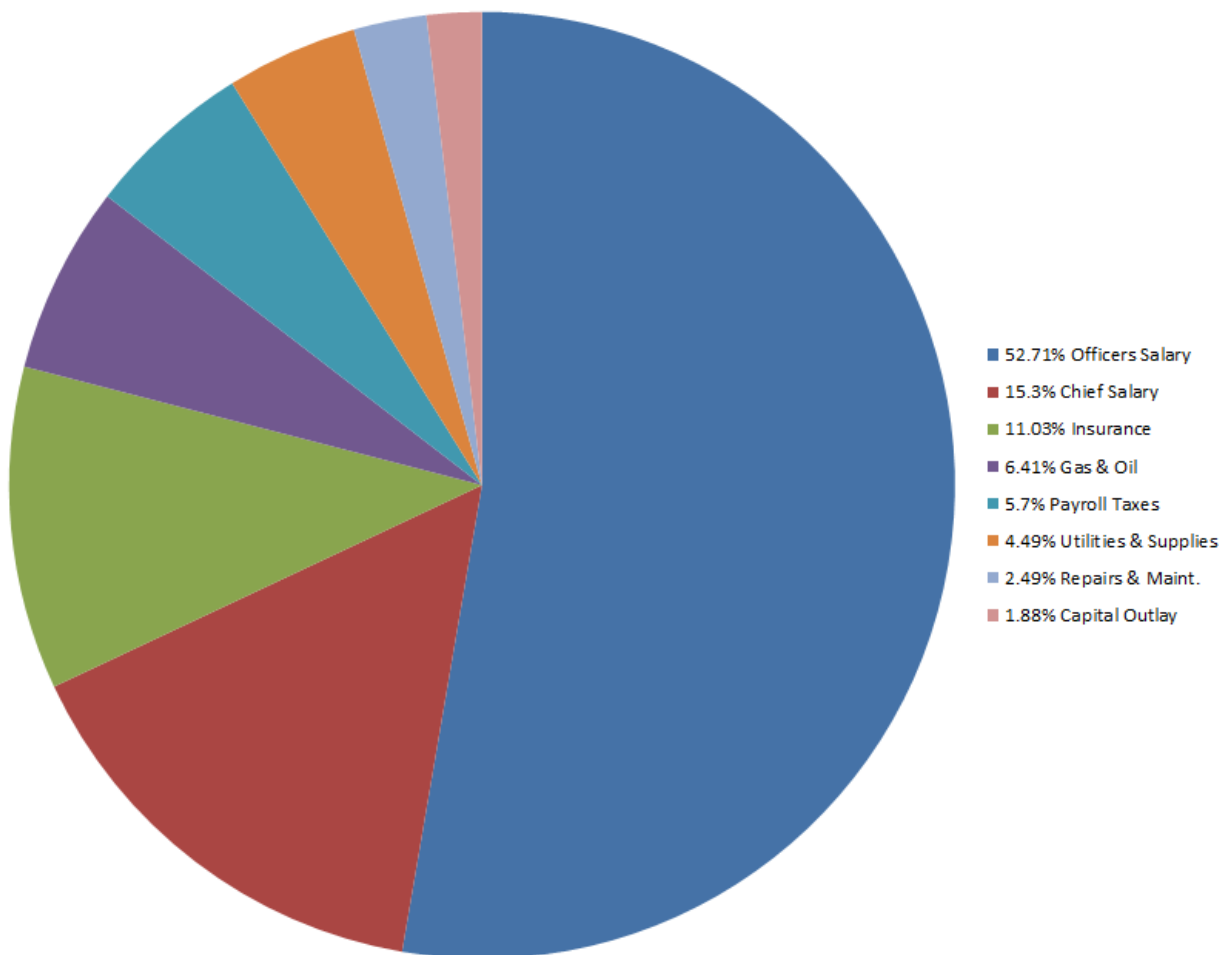


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### Budget:

In fiscal year 2016/2017, the Lawtey Police Department's operating budget was \$297,006. Officer salaries comprise 52% of operating expenses. The remaining 48% is made up of the chief's salary, payroll taxes, workers compensation, life and health insurance, telephones, uniforms, education and training, gas and oil, supplies, repairs and maintenance, utilities and capital outlay.







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### Awards and Honors:

From 2014-2018, the Lawtey Police Department as a whole as well as individual officers received various awards for service. We are proud of all the accomplishments the police department has made over the last 4 years. Thank you to the officers that made this happen and congratulations on your achievements:

### Agency Awards:

2014, DUI Challenge, 1<sup>st</sup> place

2016, DUI Challenge, 1<sup>st</sup> place

2016, Click it or Ticket Challenge, 2<sup>nd</sup> place

2017, Traffic Safety Challenge, 1<sup>st</sup> place

