



SPOKANE POLICE DEPARTMENT
CHIEF OF POLICE
CRAIG N. MEIDL

Strategic Initiatives
July 2021 Report



Public Safety and Community Health Committee Briefing
July 12, 2021



Selected Excerpts of Officer Commendations

Good afternoon. I just wanted to inform you that the officers who arrested me in September treated me with utmost respect. The police force is under incredible scrutiny lately, and I wanted to pass along my experience as a criminal that these men were respectful. They even thanked me for how I conducted myself during the arrest process, which they did not have to do. You have a wonderful team, and I'm grateful. Please take care and know these men did their duty to the highest form.

Thank you for the First Responder Drive By for Deaconess Hospital. The staff loved it and really appreciate your show of support. It has been a tough year for all of us but we work together to get through. Please extend our thanks to your awesome team!

I have always admired law enforcement and want to be a state trooper when I grow up. I would like to thank you for your service to our county and community. I was born in Spokane, and over the years, have encountered many Spokane officers. They were always very kind. At my old house, there was an ongoing problem with squatters across the street, and our neighborhood resource officer helped us and showed us what we could do. I am very appreciative of you and will continue to support law enforcement as much as I can. Thank you for everything you do.

I just wanted to say a huge thank you for the efforts on targeting street racing and gathering of cars on the Newport Highway near the old Shopko. I live only a block off the Newport Highway and the constant noise of backfiring, racing cars and burnouts has been very irritating for the last 12 months. It's been quite disturbing for my family's life on the weekends and in the evenings. I have had my house for over a decade and it's only been an insidious noise problem, since COVID started. Thank you! Thank you! Thank you for giving my neighborhood its peace back!!

I have to give a cheer out to the Spokane Police Department. This morning my brother was very, very sick, couldn't move legs, was very weak. My sister called 911. My brother-in-law being the stubborn gentleman that he is, got angry and pulled the phone plug out of the wall at the start of the conversation. So of course the conversation was dropped. About 20 minutes later, a police officer came to her door to check on them. He went to the hospital then. Thank you for coming because he had some imminent issues. I was very impressed. A big thank you-- may well have saved his life.

Thank you for your officer that showed up today after a false alarm on our system. Very prompt, squared away, and very professional.



Internal Affairs Unit Update

January 1 through May 31, 2021 Commendations and Complaints

Commendations Received: **Total: 91**

Complaints Received: **Total: 34 (25 from community)**

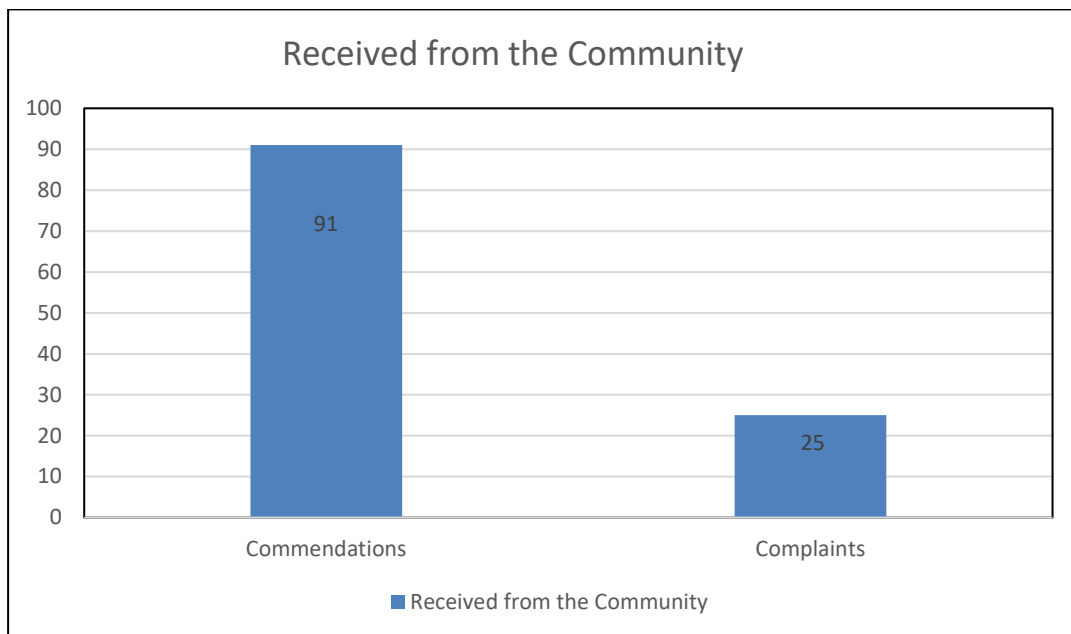
Closed Out as Inquiries: 3 (As of May 31, 2021)

An inquiry is an initial complaint about employee conduct which, even if true, would not qualify as a personnel complaint and may be handled informally by a department supervisor and shall not be considered complaints.

Source of Complaints—January 1 through May 31, 2021

Received by the Office of Police Ombudsman	Total: 11
Received by the Spokane Police Department	Total: 23
Internally Generated by the SPD	Total: 9
Generated by the Community	Total: 25

As of May 31, the department has received 74% more commendations from the community than complaints.



Use of Force Update

2021 Non-Deadly Reportable Use of Force Incidents

From January 1-May 31, 2021, there were 23 non-deadly use of force incidents- 4 K9 contacts and 19 other (e.g., TASER).

2021 Deadly Force Incidents (Officer-Involved Shootings)

From January 1-May 31, 2021, there were two deadly force incidents.

Incident 2021-20002320 (Pending Prosecutor Review)

Incident 2021-20002320 took place on January 5, 2021 in the area of 5100 N Ash. The Spokane Independent Investigative Response (SIIR) conducted the criminal investigation. The case is currently with the Spokane County Prosecutor.

Incident 2021-20059960 (Under Investigation)

Incident 2021-20059960 took place on April 17, 2021, in the area of 500 S Cannon. The Spokane Independent Investigative Response (SIIR) is conducting the criminal investigation.

2020 Deadly Force Incidents (Officer-Involved Shootings)

From January 1-December 31, 2020, there were three deadly force incidents.

Incident 2020-20136616 (Under Administrative Investigation)

Incident 2020-20136616 took place on August 7, 2020 in the area of Courtland/Crestline. The criminal investigation is by the Spokane Independent Investigative Response (SIIR) team is complete. The Prosecutor ruled the use of deadly force justified. The case is under SPD administrative investigation.

Incident 2020-20160038 (Pending Prosecutor review)

Incident 2020-20160038 took place on September 11, 2020 in the 6300 block of East Broadway. The Spokane Independent Investigative Response (SIIR) conducted the criminal investigation. The case is currently with the Spokane County Prosecutor.

Items of Interest

New Resources for Victims: SPD provides new avenues for victims of older sexual assault cases to reach out for help in solving or resolving their cases

The Spokane Police Department recently started reviewing cold case sexual assaults and has now set up a phone line and email to aid in investigations. The review is under the Sexual Assault Kit Initiative Project which calls for testing of thousands of rape kits across the state backlogged for submission to Washington



State Patrol labs. These cases may include sexual assault reports filed July 15, 2015, and prior. The Spokane Police Department is working with the Spokane County Prosecuting Attorney's Office and Victim Advocates with Lutheran Community Services Northwest (LCSNW).

Approximately 1,000 of the 1,500-plus kits submitted by SPD have been tested and results returned. Detectives are currently analyzing each case to determine which ones are likely solvable or may result in a meaningful conclusion, and which warrant closing out. Even when testing results in a CODIS (Combined DNA Index System) hit - meaning DNA evidence matches a profile registered in the federal database – there's no guarantee a case will be solved, but it may just be the missing link.

Such a DNA match recently helped SPD detectives find a suspect in a 2012 rape. The man is in prison for a previous rape but before he was incarcerated, he allegedly committed another rape. The DNA match provided evidence to resume the investigation and may result in an additional rape charge.

It is the mission and goal of the project, to seek a just resolution for survivors of sexual assault. Each case has a unique fact pattern, and there are numerous considerations to be understood regarding this program. Some of the potential courses of actions on a given case are as follows:

- Further investigation and referred for prosecution
- Further investigation and unable to establish probable cause for arrest or prosecution
- Further investigation and referral, but not pursued by prosecution for trial standards
- Review of the case for consideration of statute of limitations

In all of these cases, regardless of the ability to pursue criminal charges, the survivor can be offered assistance from the confidential, trauma-informed victim advocates at LCSNW, including Walker, their Courthouse Facility Dog. Survivors also have the option of declining assistance from LCSNW.

SPD is asking anyone who wishes to inquire about his or her case, to place a call to the listed phone number, and/or send an email to the listed email address. The survivor is asked to leave their name and a contact phone number. An investigator and/or victim advocate will return a phone call to verify identity, answer questions and discuss options moving forward.

SPD encourages survivors to initiate contact, even if, in the mind of the survivor they may not wish to pursue criminal charges.

Spokane Police Department: call 509-625-4240 or email spdvictimreporting@spokanepolice.org.

LCSNW Victim Advocates: call or text the 24/7 Sexual Assault Support Line, 509-624-7273.

Related article:

Spokane Police provide resources for sexual assault victims working to solve old cases

https://www.khq.com/news/spokane-police-provide-resources-for-sexual-assault-victims-working-to-solve-old-cases/article_6673421c-c4d4-11eb-8562-ef8407191583.html



Behavioral Health Unit

The Spokane Regional Behavioral Health Unit (BHU) is comprised of Spokane Police Officers, Spokane County Sheriff's Office/Spokane Valley Deputies, and Frontier Behavioral Health Mental Health Professionals.

April 2021 Statistics:

- 78% of contacts had an outcome other than jail or the hospital
- 0% were arrested
- 20% were emergently detained
- 0% force beyond handcuffing used
- 6% diverted from an arrestable offense and diverted from the hospital
- 396 total calls relieved from patrol
- 13,646 minutes of time saved (time the BHU spent to resolve calls, allowing patrol to respond to other calls)45% of contacts resulted in a referral

Recruiting Update

SPD continued to offer free Public Safety Testing and hold virtual recruiting meetings.

Precinct Highlights

North Precinct

Collaboration with Neighborhood Residents Addressing Quality of Life Issues

- During the month of April NRO Tim Schwering had 15 abandoned vehicles towed. The vehicles were associated with 334 calls for service. From the start of the year, he has towed 120 vehicles.
- A nuisance property was recently issued a Chronic Nuisance Notice. This property is owned by the Washington State Department of Transportation and is now set for demolition in the next 75 days.
- In one location, neighbors complained about drug activity and various nuisance issues. The NRO contacted the owner and issued a Chronic Nuisance Notice given. The owner signed an abatement agreement.
- Neighbors were complaining about "Street Racers" meeting up in the parking lot of a car wash and playing loud music in the parking lot late at night. The NRO made contact with the manager for the car wash, who expressed his support in not having them there. He signed a Trespass Authorization so officers can remove the people from the premises.
- NROs completed a CPTED project for Fairview Park. Tree removal is in the works along with other improvements, trying to improve the lighting for the park. The NRO has been contacting residents whose property abuts the alley behind the park to find out if the residents would prefer the vacation of the alley.

Crime Prevention Missions

Street racing on Division and reckless driving/trespassing in closed parking lots such as the old Shopko has been an ongoing summer problem. In response, SPD has been conducting several enforcement specials to curb this problem.



North Precinct Neighborhood Resource Officer Deanna Storch Awarded Medal of Merit

The Medal of Merit is awarded to department employees who distinguish themselves by meritorious achievement. The meritorious achievement can be for a single exceptional act or a series of actions completed in order to accomplish a difficult project or program that brings credit upon the department either internally, externally or both. The below text is from her nomination letter:



Officer Deanna Storch is assigned to the North Precinct as an NRO focused on the Neva-Wood area. Deanna takes great ownership of her assigned area and works hard to resolve issues every day. Deanna has done exceptional work with Northside retail locations in theft reduction, theft investigation and enforcement. She has worked closely with business management on CPTED concerns and unlawful camping behavior around North Point. She has worked closely with North Town Mall security and management, creating a much safer environment for our community to enjoy. Deanna does an exceptional job on a daily basis, but one incident truly stands out.

While working as an NRO enforcing illegal camping, Deanna routinely came in contact with a vulnerable young person. Utilizing outreach links and community court process linked to enforcement, the person began to cycle in and out of drug treatment, medical treatment and jail for the more than a year. The person was drug addicted, but more importantly, suffered from a very serious medical condition that was not being treated. Deanna noticed that in each contact with the person, that she was thinner and becoming more ill. Deanna recognized that the person was extremely vulnerable and would soon die if something did not change soon.

Deanna and Lt. Kendall worked with community court and outreach providers in attempts to get the person the help she desperately needed. These interventions, outreach, in patient treatment efforts all fell short due to her lack of cooperation. It became very clear that the person did not possess the capacity to adhere to changing her behavior and saving her own life. The person was not capable of caring for herself and needed to be placed into protective custody.

Deanna contacted the person's relative in Texas who agreed to provide her housing and a drug-free environment. Deanna and Lt. Kendall made arraignments with Community Court staff to hold the person in jail for over a week on an illegal camping charge. During that time, the person was treated at an area hospital to address her immediate medical needs and stable enough to travel. This time in jail also gave the person time to consider drug treatment options. Deanna visited the person in jail and presented her with the option of housing with her relative and drug treatment in Texas. The person agreed to travel to Texas and attend drug treatment. Deanna then coordinated with airport staff to have the person authorized to fly, despite not having identification. Deanna responded to the jail on her day off where the person was released from custody. At that point, Deanna gave her a courtesy ride to the airport, presented her to TSA with a booking photo to allow her fly, and stood by the person as she left for Texas.

Today Deanna is still in touch with the person and her relative. As of the latest report, the person is stable, and in drug treatment. This is work above and beyond that expected of our officers and one that deserves department recognition.

Downtown Precinct

Notable Arrests

- Over Memorial Day weekend, officers worked with Code Enforcement to clean the area under the Erie Street/Sprague Way viaduct, which had been littered with mice, human feces, needle caps, stolen property, and a slew of bicycle and bicycle parts. On Friday, they completed the clean, and as of Monday night, area was still clean and no longer a place for filth and stolen goods.

- Downtown Precinct officers enforced Spokane Municipal Codes for pedestrian interference and trespass, along with warrant arrests. DTP officers made over 100 arrests in the Downtown core and the area around Erie and Sprague Way: 44 Trespass arrests, 42 Pedestrian Interference, 10 warrants, and 5 miscellaneous crimes. Most of the people arrested had been warned numerous times prior to arrest.

Crime Prevention Missions

The Downtown Precinct has been focusing on the Stevens-Post/Main-Sprague area, providing education and enforcement when needed. Several arrests involved suspects who had felony warrants from other jurisdictions. Precinct staff assisted the Homeless Camping POD in the cleanup at 4th/Spokane.

South Precinct

Collaboration with Neighborhood Residents Addressing Quality of Life Issues

- The South Precinct's three NROs received 161 referrals for neighborhood issues during the month of May 2021.
- Precinct staff participated in the Homeless Camping POD.
- Staff have been working on several problem addresses. In one location, officers received numerous complaints of increasingly aggressive transients, including a neighbor's fence being lit on fire.
- A suspicious vehicle contact at a business resulted in the NRO discovering all three occupants had felony warrants. During the investigation, it appeared one of the individuals had likely sold drugs to another individual. Both vehicles were seized, pending a search warrant. The search of the first vehicle yielded additional cash (\$7,231.00), half pound of meth, half ounce of heroin, roughly 300 Mexi pills, a replica firearm, and a stolen Glock 48 out of Post Falls. Additional charges are pending for the owner of the vehicle.

Crime Prevention Missions

- The South Precinct's April/May mission was the medical district in and around Providence addressing transient camps and Part I crimes. Captain Arleth reports that there was a slight reduction the first two weeks of the month of May. With warmer weather and an increase in transients, officers actually saw an increase in crime and calls for service. Patrol did an outstanding job of working on the mission/hotspot area with 62 visits and a number of stops and arrests, yet still saw an increase in problems. The South Precinct continued to work this area for the safety of residents and employees of the hospitals. During the month of May, calls for service decreased by 43% and Part I crimes decreased by 50%.
- The new mission is reducing the spike in Part I Crimes in Browne's Addition, mostly attributed to transient individuals and activities in Coeur d'Alene Park and the surrounding area, and the Peaceful Valley and High bridge Park areas. After two weeks of the mission, Part I crimes were significantly down. Officers reported no suspicious activity in 30 of the recent 35 officer-initiated checks of the area. Officers have seen a reduction in vehicle prowling. There have not been any prowls in the prowl check area over the last two weeks.

Precinct Outreach



- Captain Arleth attended the June South Perry Business and Neighborhood Association (SPBNA) meeting.
- Detective Ty Snider attended the June Manito/Cliff Cannon Neighborhood Council meeting.
- Detective Ty Snider participated in the Pedal for Pennies bike event at All Saints' School.



Outreach Update



Retirement of Community Outreach Officer Jenn DeRuwe

Officer DeRuwe, SPD's first Community Outreach Officer, retired in May, after 25 years of service to Spokane Police Department. Many community members knew "Officer Jenn." She was crucial in the creation of our Police Activities League (PAL) and Youth & Police Initiative (YPI) youth outreach programs. She loved staying in touch with the youth who participated in the programs and invited them to multiple activities after the programs concluded. Officer Jenn helped provide services, such as food, to families affected by COVID. She was stationed at the Martin Luther King Center. Her passion for her work with the community was amazing. We are grateful for all of her work to build bridges between the community and the police department. She is pictured on the left with Reserve Officer Ed Richardson and youth.

New Community Outreach Officer Jen Kerns

Officer Jen Kerns has been selected as Officer Jenn DeRuwe's replacement. Officer Jen has had lots of experience with SPD outreach, including the PAL program. At right, she is pictured with Chief Meidl and Officer Roy at the Awards Ceremony. Officers Kerns and Roy received the Lifesaving Medal.





Police Activities League (PAL) Summer Program Registration Opens
 PAL bridges the gap between Spokane Police officers and youth in our community through fun and educational summer activities such as STEM, Basketball, Track, Baseball, Flag Football, and Soccer. Spokane Public Schools Summer Meal Program provides lunches each day. PAL is held at neighborhood parks in West Central, East Central, and Hillyard.

PAL engages participating youth in positive athletic and academic programs, including gang and drug intervention and prevention. It's a collaborative program of Spokane Police Department, Spokane Parks Department, Spokane Public Schools, and many other organizations working together to supply a myriad of resources in a central location.

Please see flyer and registration form for more information.

<https://my.spokanecity.org/police/community-outreach/>

To register, please contact SPDCommunityOutreach@spokanepolice.org or contact Campus Safety Specialist Ed Richardson at 509.354.5151 or EdR@spokaneschools.org

June Events with Community Outreach Unit participation

- Neighbor Days in AM Cannon Park for the West Central Neighborhood
- Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPI) Heritage Day
- Touch a Truck event at Moran Prairie elementary
- Martin Luther King Center's Juneteenth Celebration

YMCA Summer Outreach

The Community Outreach Unit will give tours of the Public Safety Building to the youth in the YMCA summer programs. The tour will include a tour of police vehicles and discussions about safety and policing.

Outreach Event at Lumen High School

In June, the Community Outreach Unit will hold a lunch and icebreaker event at Lumen High School.

Bike Safety Event

Officers from the TAC Rapid Response Bike Team had the pleasure of leading the kids of Beautiful Savior Lutheran Church recently in a bike safety event. Officers made sure that their helmets fit appropriately and instructed them on the finer points safe bicycle riding.



Community Outreach Unit Receives Chief's Citation Award

Sergeant Mike Schneider, Officer Jenn DeRuwe, and Officer Graig Butler were awarded the Chief's Citation Award for their work with youth during COVID-19 restrictions. Here is a summary from their nomination letter:

As we all know, 2020 was an extraordinary year for a variety of reasons. COVID-19 provided unique challenges for all police departments and conducting community outreach endeavors through varying quarantine and shut-down statuses was no exception. That being said, the Spokane Police Department's Community Outreach Unit, with efforts being led by Sergeant Mike Schneider, did an exceptional job overcoming obstacles throughout 2020 and not letting bridges we have built with the community collapse for reasons outside of our control.

When the Spokane School District had to modify their school instruction to a remote learning platform, Youth Police Initiatives were no longer possible. For summer months, with COVID restrictions in place, our usual Police Activities League could not be conducted as we have done in years past. The Community Outreach Unit jumped into action to figure out new ways that these programs could be conducted and/or figure out new ways to reach Spokane Youth.

In order to continue to reach Middle and High School levels students and to try to fill in the holes caused by not being able to hold YPI sessions, the Community Outreach conducted the following efforts:

- Cold-called schools that were still in session in an attempt to get involved
- Met with private schools who had elementary kids, twice
- Met with at least one Girl Scout Troop
- Met with a school who was providing day care to 1st through 3rd grades twice
- Met with church youth groups
- On-line Zoom session with Montessori school's philosophy class (4th grade)
- On-line Zoom session with teenage and adult special needs individuals (ARC of Spokane)
- Telephonically following up with former YPI kids; met with at least 4, had lunch with 2, 1 out of the 4 followed through and went on hike with Community Outreach
- Met one on one with at least half a dozen kids for lunch
- Followed up with habitual run away youth, in cooperation with Investigations, in order to determine if there might be services available to them
- Officer Butler continued to meet with Juvenile Court's juvenile diversion program
- Officer Butler continued to meet on-line with Frontier Behavioral Health's Evergreen Club
- Participated in Ferris High School Lunch hand-out and Second Harvest's Food Distribution once a week throughout the remainder of the school year (March – mid-June).

Police Activities League (PAL)

- Conducted a modified PAL that consisted of 4 weeks, 3 days a week, 150 kids participated, just over 20 officers involved
- Partnerships with YMCA, Spokane Parks
- Officer DeRuwe continually touched base with families and children who previously attended PAL and YPI in order to determine if they had any special needs, such as food. If so, she worked with partner organizations to provide for the needs.

Christmas program

- Worked with schools and nonprofits to identify children in need-- 113 individuals impacted; 22 different families were sponsored
- The program was in addition to one-off projects like assisting a family who experienced a devastating fire and another family that had an expensive special needs stroller stolen, among others

I am proud that the Community Outreach Unit took this challenge head-on and regardless of COVID restrictions, had a very productive year.

