



Coke County Sheriff's Office

From the Desk of the Sheriff Annual Report

1. Administration was formed in a way that would be professional, holding employees accountable by law and policy and building respect and rapport with the community. The working administration consists of Chief Deputy Doug Atkins, Assistant Chief Chuck Evans, and Administrative Assistant April Devotie. These individuals come to work daily with one goal and that is to give the office and the community what they elected us to do and that is to be consistent in our work and relationship with Coke County. Our office has so many qualified employees that do a tremendous job, although none of us are perfect, we do believe in accountability and each employee strives hard each day to provide the best law enforcement we can. We are a young agency with young deputies which we know cause young mistakes, but they work through their actions and develop much better. Our admin supervisors consist of Patrol Captain Jonathan Ochs, Detective Captain Bob Schaff, Narcotics Captain David Robertson, Administrative Lieutenant Wes Keys, Chief of Corrections Josh Hartsell, Assistant Chief of Corrections Corey Ball, and Administrative Lieutenant Daniel Blankenship. These supervisors are held to a higher standard and work extremely hard to make sure each event is handled accordingly. There are so many areas of this department that seek good leadership, and we must be an example to all employees.

- starting from the Sheriff position. We believe in working beside each other.
2. Awarded 1.8 million dollars in grant funding projects which included: Mental Health, Recidivism and Rehabilitation for inmate population, complete funding of the SRO program in our schools, body scanner grant for the jail, able to purchase a new transport transit van for prisoner transport, two new transport SUV's for mental health and inmate transport for local and out of county transports, THSO office grant that is to allow overtime coverage for DUI detection and saturation for patrol, laptop and mounts for cruisers.
 3. Held 8 community outreach meetings which allow the community to come in and discuss the operation of our sheriff's office and to listen to the concerns of our community. These are valuable to our community and we look forward to the continued growth of the public.
 4. Increased salaries for all employees within the sheriff's office and the detention center with competitive pay around East Tennessee by working closely with the county mayor, county commission, budget committee, and finance director. Starting patrol deputy has increased from \$25,250.00 to an average starting salary of \$39,520.00 to \$41,496.00. and corrections have increased from \$22,240.00 to an average salary of \$33,280.00 to \$34,944.00. All non-certified officers have increased to a minimum of \$16.00 per hour.
 5. Have increased the ability and training to all non-certified deputies by cross training in all positions such as court security, inmate transport, civil process, litter control, and animal control. This allows these positions to be more involved in all day-to-day operations instead of one single position doing an assigned job. They now can work all positions and add manpower to each area when services needed.
 6. The DARE program was reinstated and has had two successful graduations from our county schools. We are excited for the new year coming to provide more drug education to our schools.
 7. Our office has successfully built a 4-man narcotics team and have added a 5th detective position through a grant that will be a violent crime detective and narcotics investigator. This will provide an additional detective that will work mainly on violent crimes, overdose deaths, and narcotic related crime. This additional detective will really vamp up our divisions to better control the shortages we have had over the years.
 8. We have added a new animal control officer position to this year's budget. This will increase the AOC from one officer to two. One has maintained the

county for over 30 years, so we are in hopes that this will provide better coverage for this department. Animal control is not a law provided service but an asset to our community and we must work diligently to make this work. The city and county are working together to build a building to provide the services for Newport and Cocke County at their highest level ever and we look forward to this well-needed facility. We can do wonders when this building is available.

9. We have completed 29 Active Drug Raids since September 1, 2022. This does not include buy-bust cases nor indictments that have been brought down by a grand jury. This includes fentanyl, heroine, pills, and meth charges. The work from the narcotics team and department has really worked hard and the judicial system is really helping in these cases. We appreciate their assistance.
- 10.6 - Drug and Traffic Saturations since September 1st, 2022. These saturations are pin pointed based on criminal activity throughout the county. We look at theft and drug areas of concern to base these saturations. These are headed up by Chief Deputy Doug Atkins and he organizes these by reaching out to Tennessee Highway Patrol, Newport Police Department, and others that would like to work with us.
- 11.39 Community Interactions events involving our office. These events are encouraged, and we appreciate the opportunity to serve. As we have stated for a year now, we believe in public interaction to build a relationship with our citizens. It is required by the administration to work with our community and be here for the people.
12. Communication solutions in the office. We have implemented monthly administration meetings with supervisors, and we meet with patrol supervisors every quarter to relate the needs of our office. Each supervisor is required to submit an email at the end of every shift to disclose what incidents took place on that shift, so we as an administration can keep up with what is going on daily. Communication has always been something that can deter progress, so we have made this a priority to be involved in daily decisions.
13. Training for our officers. We have implemented training for each employee that better trains them for the specific job they are assigned to. The biggest training opportunities come for our patrol supervisors. They each are required to attend supervisor training and understand what the position

requires. We are strict on supervision, and we must keep them at a higher standard.

14. School Resource Officers. This is one of the most important successes our community has. We have 11 SRO's which cover all schools in our county. They are supervised by Lieutenant Danny Ray Reece and Sgt. Dan Williams. We have contracted with the state of Tennessee to fully fund our school officer project. This is something that is very well needed, and they do an outstanding job for our educational staff and students.
15. The courthouse has a full-time maintenance and janitor that provides great service to the buildings. We have set day-to-day rules on what must be done each day to keep our buildings clean and up to our standards. We have renovated the restrooms in the courthouse and are working on so many other projects that include the installation of new windows. Floors have been stripped down and waxed, and the staircase railing is in the process of modification. The outside is getting better with looks. The pressure washing takes place often and the lawn care is kept up as we require. We want to take pride in our facilities for the people of Cocke County to have something to be proud of.
16. We are requesting, over the next few years, the addition of 8 new full-time patrol officers. This will increase our shift work from 5 per shift to 7 per shift. This would allow us to zone our officers to better patrol areas of the county and be more responsive to 911 calls and other patrol orders that come into the office. We want to be more responsive in our response. We work with the same number of deputies today as we have since 1998. We have tripled call volume, so the manpower shortage would be addressed with this increase. We are working on funding this without increasing any tax rate.
17. We have partnered with Amerimed Medical Transport with a grant to fund all mental health transport for Cocke County. This will free up our officers from having to transport mental health patients and allow a medical provider to handle this. This will allow our officers to stay in the county instead of having to travel to Knox, Hamilton, Davidson, and Shelby County for mental health transport. This cuts down on fuel costs and saves on patrol vehicle mileage.
18. We are in the process of partnering with East Tennessee Crime Stoppers. This will give our office and the citizens another tool to report criminal and drug activity in Cocke County. This is going to be a good source.

- 19.** We have received our first Jail Inspection Report since taken office and we went from 20 detention facility deficiencies in the OLD Jail to 9 deficiencies which came from overcrowding, square footage, and construction of building not meeting minimum standards. The other deficiencies came from a couple of paperwork issues, but we have corrected those since they reported. In the ANNEX jail, we went from 26 reported deficiencies to 12 deficiencies which included the same as old jail with overcrowding, squared footage, and construction. We did have a few more paperwork issues but as reported, these have been corrected as well since they inspected the detention center. A lot of work has been put into the facility in a year, but we have much more that must be done. These detention centers can never be certified by the state, but we will do everything we can to keep the building going and provide the services that state law requires. We are pushing every day to better the conditions of the detention center and maintain safety for the inmates and correction officers. We have implemented new training standards for our officers and are holding them accountable. It is a tough job, and we are proud of the work they provide each day.
- 20.** We have increased our office hours for the citizens of Cocke County. Our office opens at 7:00 am Monday-Thursday and closes at 4:30 pm. Friday, we open from 8:00 am and close at 4:30 pm, and we open on Saturday at 8:00 am and close at 11:00. This is an increase of nine and half hours more a week of provided services.
- 21.** Patrol Division along with other areas in our agency, have battled short handed shifts. We want to commend them for their efforts to work hard and keep driving. We are starting to over come these issues and we look forward to working beside our men and women of this office.

“As the sheriff, I cannot thank our entire agency enough for the work they provide each day. They have had to adapt to so many changes over this last year but have done very well. Changes in policy, work habits, and adapting to a newly elected administration will take a toll on your employees as I have gone through 5 changes. We are proud of them and the continued efforts they provide”.

“We thank you for the opportunity to serve you and the community. We are committed to Cocke County, and we look forward to serving you each day. Please feel free to contact our office with any concerns that you may have so we can always better our office. We are not perfect, but we must know the concerns you have to make the expectations greater each day. We feel we are moving in a positive direction and our administration will be meeting first week of September to reflect the previous year to decide on what we can do better and build a sound Sheriff’s Office for the department and the people of Cocke County”.

Sheriff C.J. Ball



08-31-2023