

BERKS COUNTY DETECTIVES

2016 ANNUAL REPORT



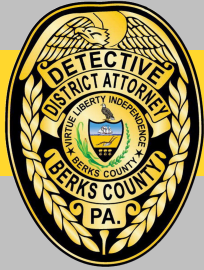


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BERKS COUNTY DETECTIVES

**BERKS COUNTY SERVICES CENTER
633 COURT STREET, 15TH FLOOR
READING, PENNSYLVANIA
610-478-7171**

DISTRICT ATTORNEY: JOHN T. ADAMS

CHIEF COUNTY DETECTIVE: MICHAEL J. GOMBAR

ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT: AMY L. SUNDSTROM

CRIME LIEUTENANT: TODD E. TRUPP

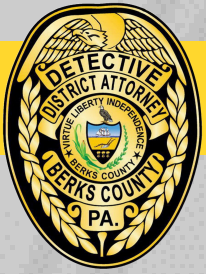
NARCOTIC LIEUTENANT: NELSON ORTIZ

DETECTIVES: 33

COMPUTER FORENSIC ANALYSTS: 2

SUPPORT STAFF: 4





MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the Berks County District Attorney's Detective Unit is to investigate crimes, enforce the law, assist local, state and federal law enforcement agencies, and support quality public safety by delivering respectful, professional and dependable investigative services.

FROM THE CHIEF

Michael J. Gombar CHIEF COUNTY DETECTIVE

Welcome, it is my pleasure and privilege as the Chief County Detective of Berks County to present the 2016 Annual Report for the Berks County District Attorney's Detective Unit. This report will provide a snapshot of the hard work and achievements of the men and women of our detective unit. I encourage you to take the time to review the information and various detailed statistics that you may find useful.

The year was extremely busy and challenging for our detectives. Statistically we experienced an overall increase in investigations and arrests. Additionally, many of our local police departments of Berks County reached out for our investigative support. Together, with the assistance of the District Attorney's Drug Task Force and Major Crime Task Force we were able to satisfy the needs of our law enforcement community by successfully arresting and prosecuting the criminals that threaten the safety of our community.

The personnel of our detective unit, both sworn and civilian are committed to providing dependable investigative service to the citizens of Berks County. Each and every one of our members played an integral part of our success. As we move forward, we will continue to build upon our accomplishments and improve our services.

In closing, I want to express my sincere appreciation to the men and women of this organization, who strive every day, often under difficult and stressful circumstances, to serve the people of our community. I am truly proud to be the Chief Detective of this Detective Unit, which I consider one of the finest in our Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Gombar

Chief County Detective



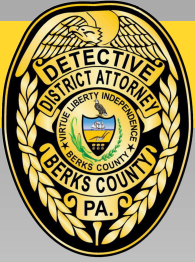
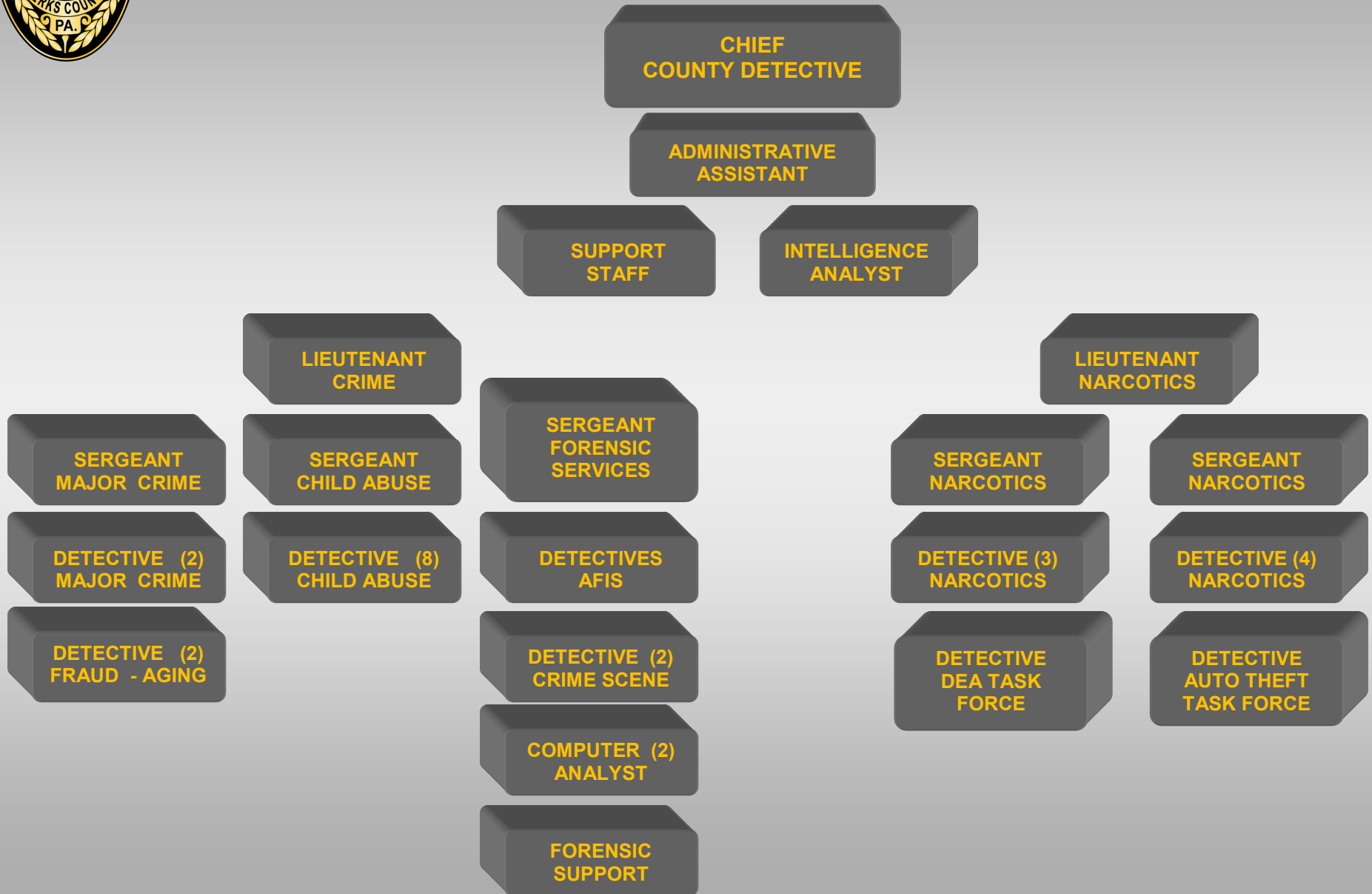


Table of Organization





THE YEAR IN REVIEW

January 16

Narcotics detectives arrested Jose M. Santiago-Burgos in Southeast Reading for distributing bulk amounts of heroin, methamphetamine and marijuana with a street value of over \$60,000. Two stolen guns and a large amount of cash were seized from his home.

January 26

Narcotics detectives arrested Michael Smith at his Lower Heidelberg Township home for operating an internet based synthetic marijuana operation.

February 26

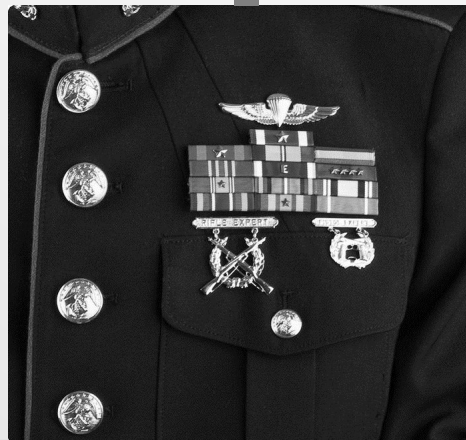
Major Crime Unit detectives charged Shane G. Sperow with unsworn falsification to authorities for falsely purporting himself as a retired, decorated member of the U.S. Marine Corps. during a sentencing hearing before the Honorable

March 2

Major Crime Unit detectives arrested John A. Gibo relative to a financial elder abuse complaint from the Berks County Area Agency on Aging. Gibo was acting in the capacity of the power of attorney for his 89 year old mother and mismanaged over \$36,000 of her money. He used that money for his own personal

April 28

In a joint investigation, Berks County Narcotics detectives, York City Police Department and D.E.A. arrested two City of Reading residents, Ruben Morales and Jose Aviala, for operating a large scale cocaine operation. Seized during the investigation was bulk amounts of cocaine (valued at over \$400,000), \$70,000 in U.S. Currency and several handguns and assault weapons.





THE YEAR IN REVIEW

June 9

"Operation Antidote", Narcotics detectives from the Berks County District Attorney's Drug Task Force, Reading Police Vice Section and the PA State Police dismantled a drug trafficking organization in Berks County after arresting 16 active members of the organization for the distribution of Heroin, Cocaine, Marijuana and Prescription Drugs. Detectives utilized a court authorized wire taps as the primary

August 6

Major Crime Unit detectives investigated the tragic domestic violence incident, in which Mark Jason Short Sr. took his own life with a handgun after he shot and killed his wife, three young children and the family dog inside their Sinking Spring

August 22

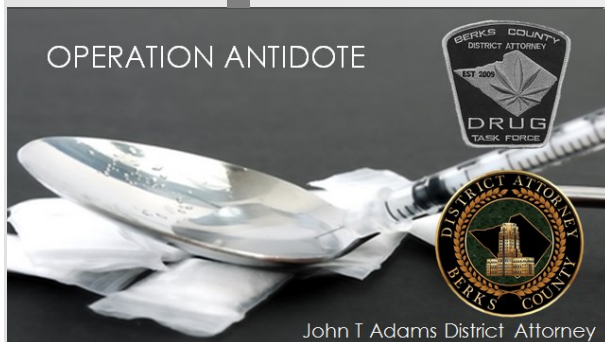
The Cumru, Hamburg and Western Berks Police Departments joined 23 other Berks County Police Department participating in the Berks County District Attorney's Pharmaceutical Drop Box Program.

September 22

Narcotics detectives conducted an early morning drug round-up of 22 drug dealers arrested for distributing controlled substances, which included heroin, methamphetamine, cocaine, marijuana and synthetic marijuana in various neigh-

October 13

Major Crime Unit detectives arrested a 16 year old juvenile female from the Wilson School District for Terroristic Threats. During the investigation, detectives learned that the defendant utilized a cellphone to create an Instagram social media account to post violent threatening messages, while purporting herself to be a





THE YEAR IN REVIEW

October 21

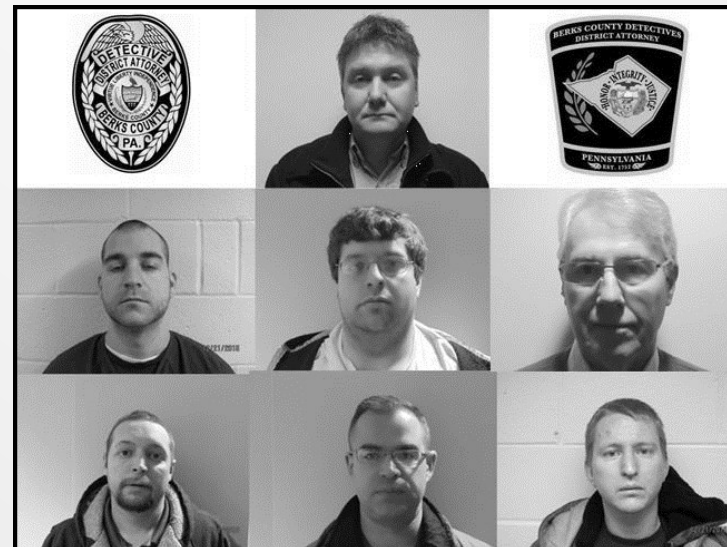
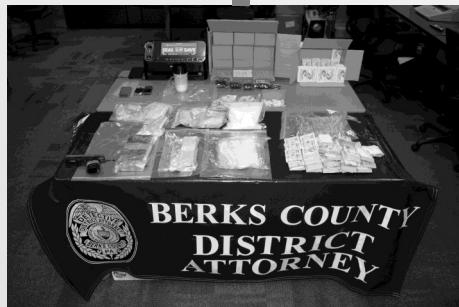
Berks County Drug Task detectives and the Oley Twp. Police Department dismantled a marijuana grow operation at a farm house in Oley Township. During the investigation, detectives seized 246 marijuana plants, large amounts of packaged

December 16

Narcotics detectives arrested two Dominican Nationals, Luis Francisco Acosta-Reyes and Roberto Rodrigues-Jimenez for operating a large scale heroin trafficking operation in Berks County. During the investigation detective seized large amounts of heroin and fentanyl with a street value of over one million dollars.

December 21

Child Abuse Unit detectives conducted a countywide child pornography round-up and arrested 7 suspects for possessing and/or disseminating child pornography via the Internet.

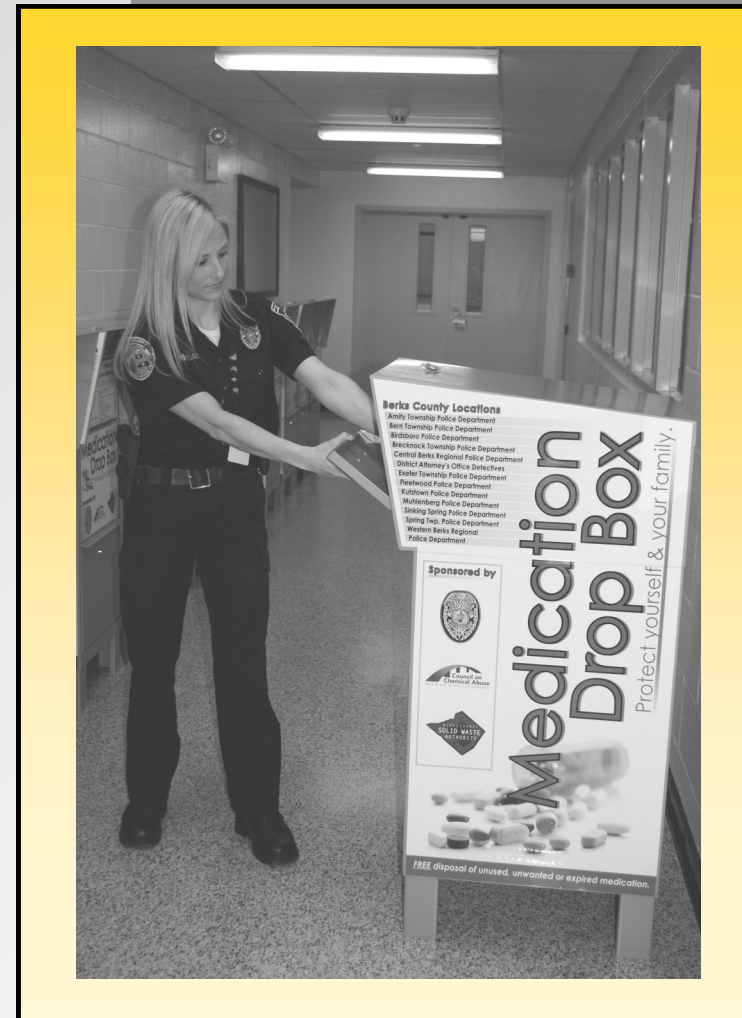




PHARMACEUTICAL DROPBOX PROGRAM

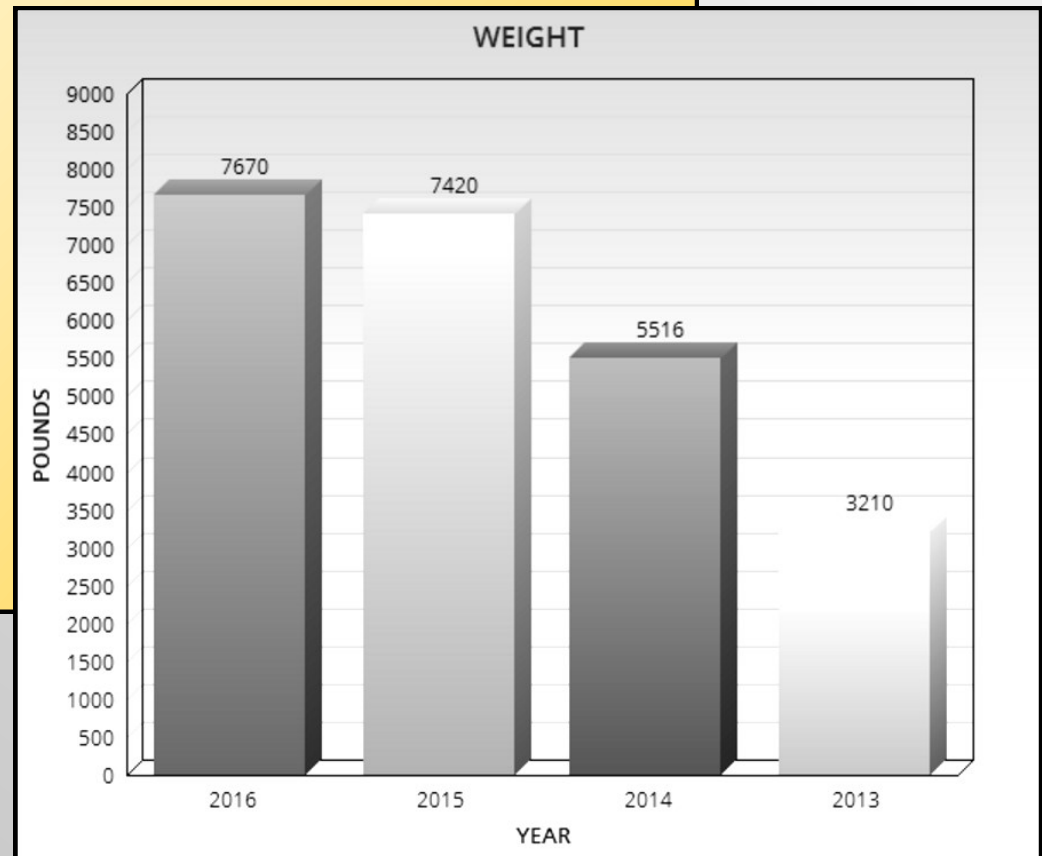
BERKS COUNTY DROPBOX LOCATIONS

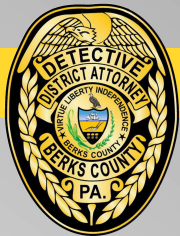
Amity Township Police Department – 2004 Weavertown Road, Douglassville
Bally Police Department – 425 Chestnut Street, Bally
Berks County Agricultural Center – 1st Floor Lobby, 1328 Welfare Road, Leesport
Berks County Coroner's Office – 1047 MacArthur Road, Suite 200, Reading
Bern Township Police Department – 1069 Old Bernville Road, Reading
Birdsboro Police Department – 200 E. Main Street, Birdsboro
Boyertown Police Department – 100 S. Washington Street, Boyertown
Brecknock Township Police Department – 889 Alleghenyville Road, Mohnton
Caernarvon Township Police Department – 3307 Main Street, Morgantown
Central Berks Regional Police Department – 2147 Perkiomen Avenue, Reading
Cumru Township Police Department – 1775 Welsh Road, Mohnton
Exeter Township Police Department – 4975 Demoss Road, Reading
Fleetwood Police Department – 110 W. Arch Street, Fleetwood
Hamburg Police Department – 61. N. Third Street, Hamburg
Kutztown Police Department – 45 Railroad Street, Kutztown
Muhlenberg Township Police Department – 210 George Street, Reading
Penn State Berks Police Services – Perkins Student Center, 2080 Tulpehocken Road, Reading
Reading Police Department – City Hall 815 Washington Street, Reading
Robesonia Borough Hall – 75 S. Brooke Street, Robesonia
Shillington Police Department – 999 E. Broad Street, Shillington
Sinking Spring Police Department – 3940 Penn Avenue, Sinking Spring
Spring Township Police Department – 2800 Shillington Road, Reading
Tilden Township Police Department – 870 Hex Highway, Hamburg
Tulpehocken Township Police Department – 22 Rehrersburg Road, Rehrersburg
West Reading Police Department – 500 Chestnut Street, West Reading
Western Berks Regional Police Department – 100 N. Reber Street, Wernersville
Wyomissing Police Department – 22 Reading Boulevard, Wyomissing



In 2013, Berks County District Attorney John T. Adams announced the launching of Berks County Pharmaceutical Drop Box Program in Berks County, at the Berks County Agricultural Center. This program was developed as a cooperative effort between the District Attorney's Office, the Council on Chemical Abuse (COCA), and Berks County Solid Waste Authority. This Pharmaceutical / Medication Drop Box Disposal Program will allow Berks County residents to discard unused or unwanted medication year round at secure locations. Medications are collected in many forms including: tablet, liquid, ointment, inhaler, powder or patch.

In 2016, the District Attorney's Office partnered with the Pennsylvania National Guard to safely dispose of unwanted prescription medication. The National Guard incinerates the medications on-site, reducing the need to drive to an incinerator in York County. This service is provided free to the residents of Berks County.





2016 NATIONAL TAKE - BACK INITIATIVE

BERKS COUNTY MEDICAL SOCIETY

BERKS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY

On April 30, 2016, the Berks County District Attorney's Office partnered with the Berks County Medical Society to host a Prescription Drug Take-Back Day. The event was held at the First Energy Stadium in Reading, Pennsylvania.

Over 300 vehicles delivered unused and unwanted prescription medications to physicians, pharmacists and police officers, who volunteered their time to work the event.

The take-back served two purposes: Keeping unwanted and unused prescription medications out of a landfill and also from getting into the hands of those not officially prescribed.

Twenty-six boxes were filled with 642 pounds of prescription medication that was later taken to an incinerator for proper disposal. This event coincided with the Federal Drug Enforcement Administration's National Take Back Day.





NALOXONE PROGRAM

Berks County District Attorney's Office Naloxone Program

Naloxone Saves Lives

Due to the alarming heroin epidemic, District Attorney John Adams initiated the "Naloxone Program" for any police departments that are willing to participate. The program gives police officers the legal right, under the "Good Samaritan" law, to administer the drug Naloxone to any victim of heroin and/or an opioid overdose. Naloxone is a medication that can reverse an overdose that is caused by any opioid drug (prescription pain medications or heroin). When administered during an overdose, Naloxone blocks the effects of opioids on the brain and restores breathing to the individual within two to eight minutes.

The "Good Samaritan" provision of Act 139 encourages bystanders to summon emergency medical services by calling 9-1-1 when witnessing an overdose. The Act offers certain criminal and civil protections for those that do. The Act also allows first responders or other organizations acting at the direction of a health care professional, the authorization to administer Naloxone to individuals experiencing an overdose.

The Pennsylvania District Attorney's Association, through a grant from Capital BlueCross, reimburses the Berks County District Attorney's office for all costs of the Naloxone purchased for every participating police department.

In 2015, when the District Attorney's Office earmarked into this program, it started out with eight participating departments. Since 2016, the program has grown to twenty-two participating police departments.

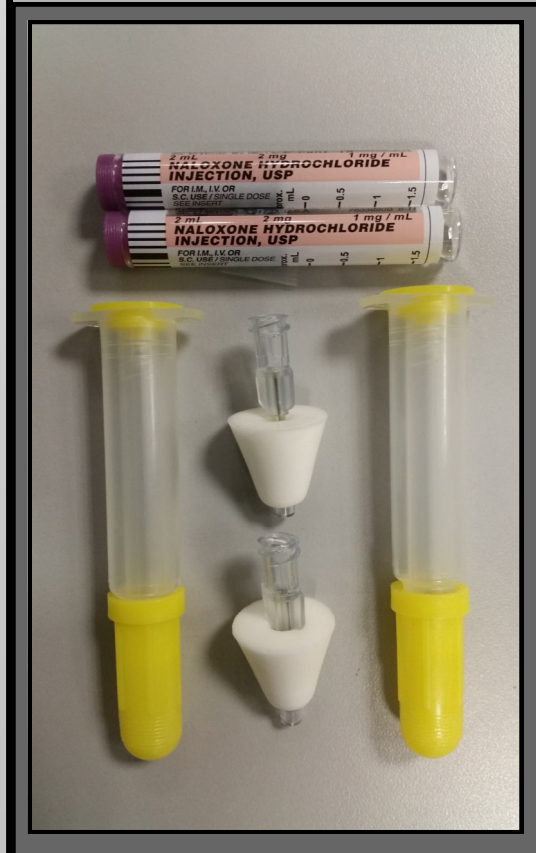
2016 Participating Police Departments

Amity Twp. PD
Berks County Sheriffs
Boyerstown PD
Douglass Twp. PD
Heidelberg Twp. PD
Penn State Berks PD
Spring Twp. PD
Wyomissing PD

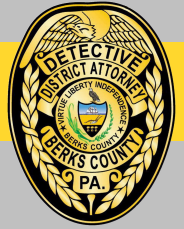
Berks County Detectives
Bern Twp. PD
Caernarvon Twp. PD
Exeter Twp. PD
Kutztown PD
Reading PD
West Reading PD

Berks County Probation & Parole
Birdsboro PD
Central Berks Regional PD
Fleetwood PD
Muhlenberg Twp. PD
Sinking Spring PD
Western Berks Regional PD

In 2016, Berks County law enforcement officers administered Naloxone twenty-nine times and were successful in saving twenty-four lives.



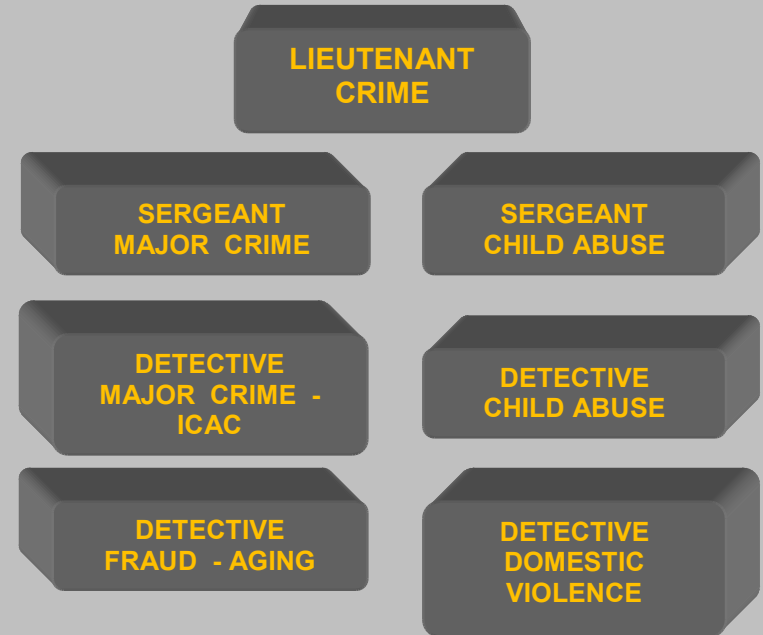
CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS



In general, the police departments in Berks County are staffed by twenty-five or fewer sworn officers. The majority of these officers are assigned to patrol duties and have limited specialized training. These departments must balance their resources, manpower and finances with the concerns and demands of the community. Often it becomes difficult to stretch their available resources and address community issues.

The Criminal Investigation Section is comprised of two distinct entities, Forensic Services and Criminal Investigations. Detectives from the Criminal Investigation Section work closely with police officers from over forty local Berks County police departments, state and federal law enforcement agencies. The majority of the Berks County Detectives are seasoned veterans with a vast amount of police experience and expertise, which they acquired from specialized schools and training.

The Berks County Detectives offer their specialized services to those departments that do not have the expertise and / or resources to successfully investigate a specific crime. The Criminal Investigation Section is led by Lieutenant Todd Trupp.

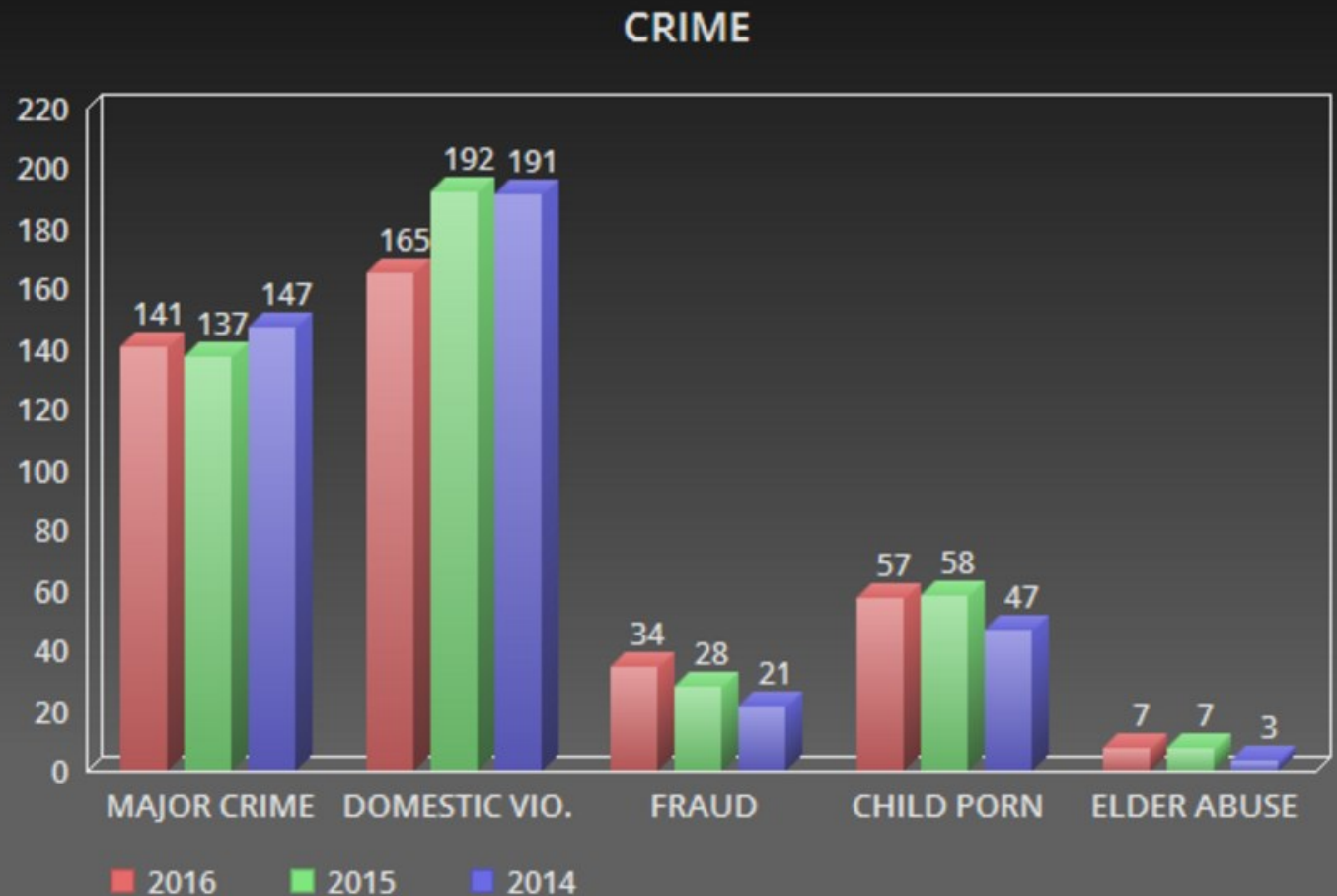


Sgt. Gerardo Vega and Sgt. Harold Shenk are the first line supervisors for the Criminal Investigations Section, which is responsible for the following:

- Bad Check Restitution Program
- Bingo Enforcement
- Child Abuse
- Domestic Violence Unit
- Financial Crimes
- Elderly Abuse, physical and financial
- Major Crime
- Megan's Law Enforcement
- Precious Metals Unit

CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

The Criminal Investigations Unit of the Berks County District Attorney's Office had another busy year in 2016. Child abuse investigations continued to increase as a result of a change in legislation mandating the reporting of allegations of child abuse. The additional crimes investigated by the unit remained consistent with crimes reported in 2015.





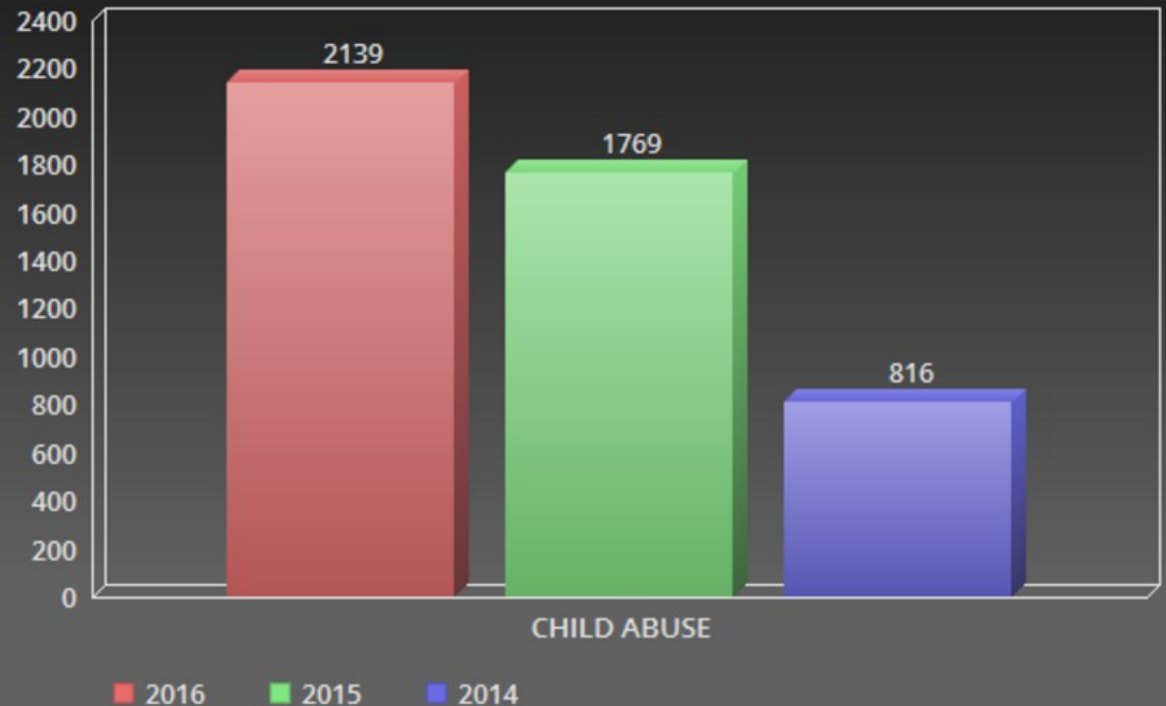
CHILD ABUSE INVESTIGATIONS

In 2016, the Crime Section experienced the fifth consecutive year of growth in the area of child sexual and physical abuse. The reporting law was changed in the latter part of 2014, and as a result, a large increase in the number of Physical Child Abuse cases was observed. Incidents of alleged Child Abuse cases almost tripled from 2014 to 2016.

The Crime Section consists of two sergeants and twelve detectives, all of whom investigate a multitude of criminal allegations. At any given time, all twelve detectives can be actively working on Child Abuse investigations, due to the time sensitive nature of these crimes.



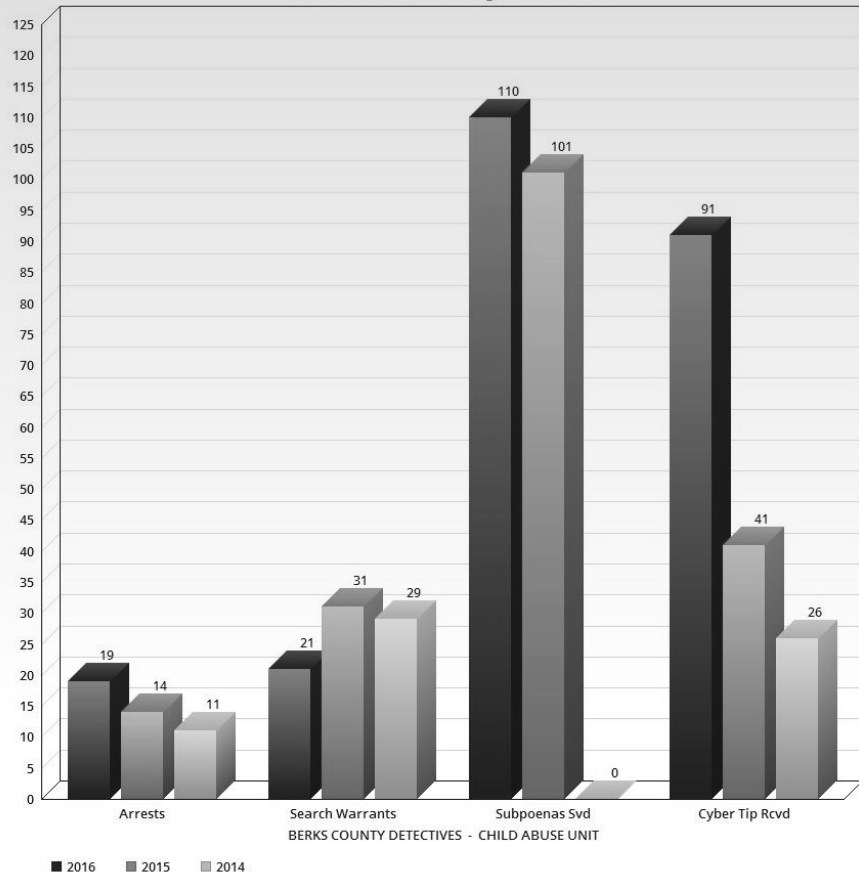
CHILD ABUSE



INTERNET CRIMES AGAINST CHILDREN



ICAC - Internet Crimes Against Children



The Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force Program is a national network of 61 coordinated task forces representing over 3,500 federal, state, and local law enforcement and prosecutorial agencies. These agencies are continually engaged in proactive and reactive investigations and prosecutions of persons involved in child abuse and exploitation involving the internet.

The Berks County Detectives joined in the Internet Crimes Against Children Task Force in 2014 and has committed available resources to combating both the creation and dissemination of child pornography. In three years, 44 persons have been arrested for these offenses. Detectives take a proactive approach as opposed to a reactive approach when investigating these crimes.

Detectives Trevor Ritter and Thomas Weaver are cross designated members of the Federal Bureau of Investigation Task Force against Child Pornography. The unit actively works with both federal agents and prosecutors to ensure that offenders receive the maximum sentences possible.

In addition, the Internet Crimes against Children Task Force funds annual training in Atlanta, Georgia for detectives assigned to the task force. The task force also reimburses the County of Berks for all overtime spent on child related crimes. Prior to 2016, ICAC reimbursed the county for all manpower hours associated with these crimes. Cut-backs were required due to lack of federal funding. In 2016, \$6,900 was returned to the county for overtime funds expended.

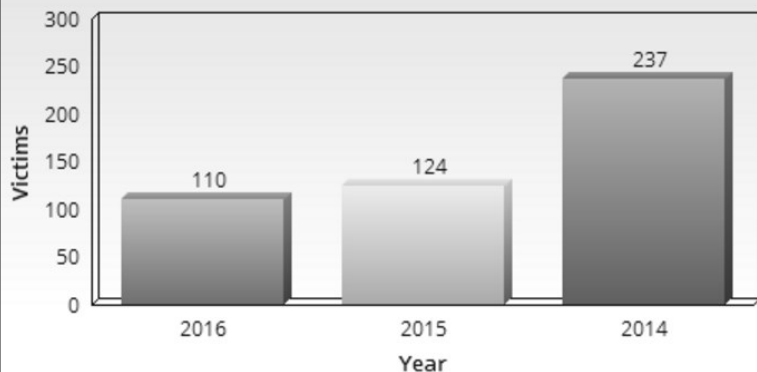


BAD CHECK RESTITUTION



The District Attorney's Bad Check Restitution Program was initiated in the spring of 2008 to combat the negative impact of bad checks passed to local businesses. Bad checks affect everyone. Specifically, bad checks result in higher consumer costs that must be passed on to offset losses and increased taxes to cover the additional costs for law enforcement and prosecution. In an effort to alleviate this problem, the Bad Check Restitution Program has been organized to assist local merchants with bad check losses. The primary goal of the program is to obtain full restitution for the victim without adding to the financial burden of the criminal justice system. Accordingly, first time bad check offenders are given the opportunity to avoid criminal prosecution by attending a mandatory intervention class in addition to paying restitution. All of this is accomplished without any cost to the taxpayers. The program has certainly been a success, evidenced by the fact that merchant losses have decreased every year since its inception in 2008. Restitution is down, as a direct result of fewer cases filed with the District Attorney's Office.

Bad Check Restitution
Reduction of Victimization



District Attorney's Office - Bad Check Program

	<u>2016</u>	<u>2015</u>	<u>2014</u>
Restitution Returned	\$9,068	\$17,845	\$50,115
Checks Filed	220	236	847
Class Attendance	29	34	97

FORENSIC SERVICES

LIEUTENANT
CRIME

SERGEANT
FORENSIC SERVICES

DETECTIVE
AFIS

DETECTIVE
CRASH
RECONSTRUCTION

DETECTIVE
CRIME SCENE

DETECTIVE
PROPERTY

COMPUTER
FORENSICS

FORENSIC
SUPPORT

CELLPHONE
FORENSICS

Sgt. Robert F. Johnson is the first line supervisor of Forensic Services.

Forensic Services is responsible for the following:

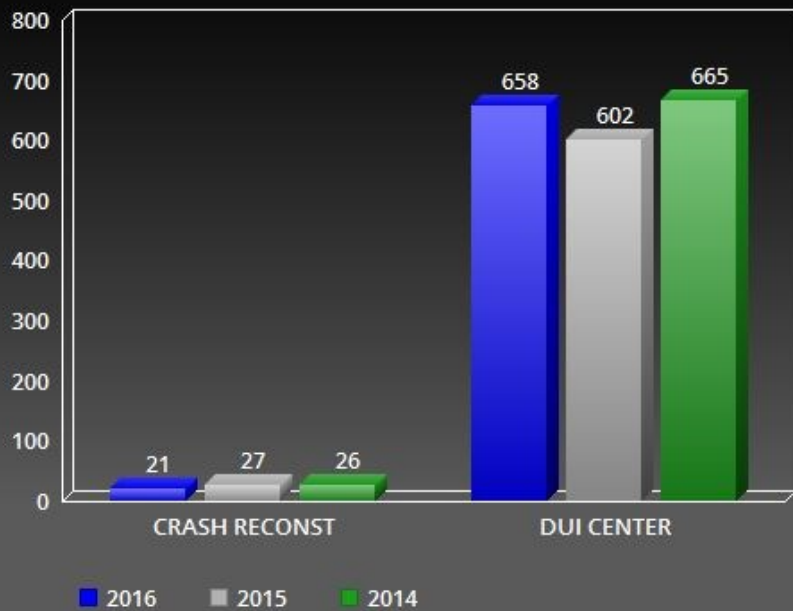
- AFIS—Automated Fingerprint Identification System
- Crime Scene Processing
- Computer and Cellular Telephone Forensics
- Cellular Telephone Kiosk
- Crash Reconstruction
- Berks County DUI Processing Center
- Pharmaceutical Drop Box Program



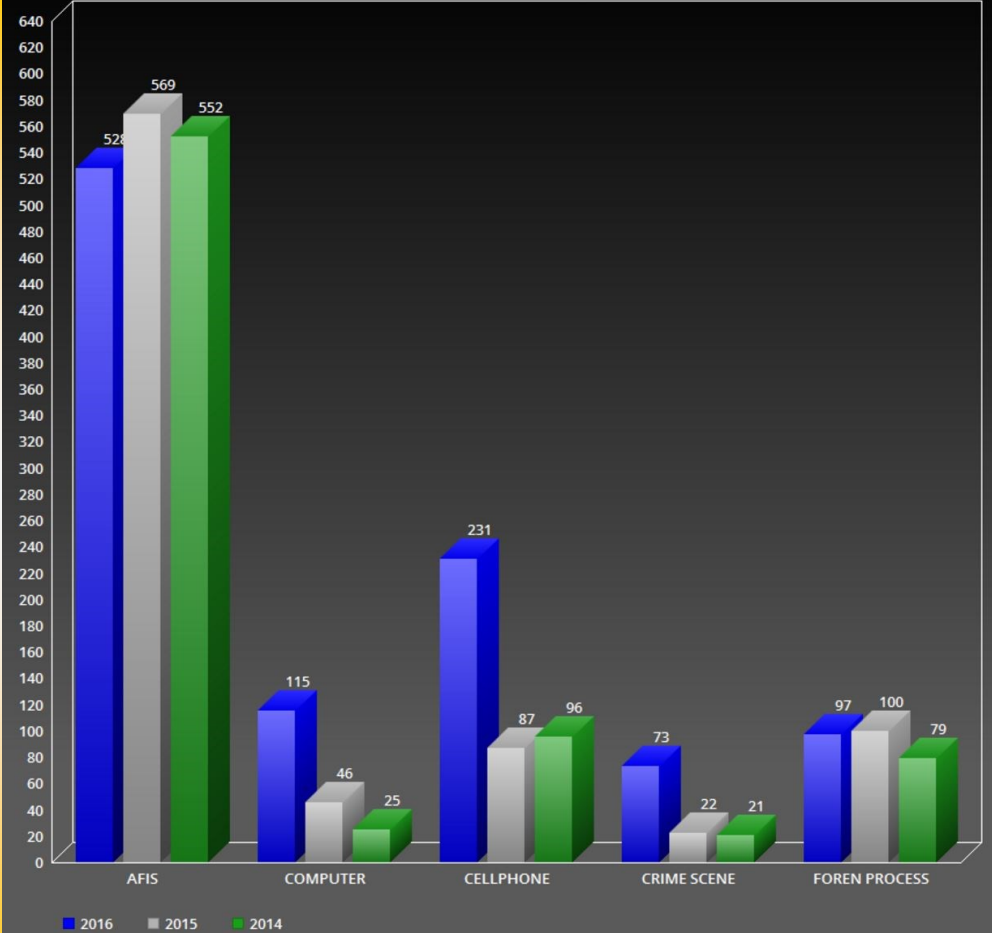


FORENSIC SERVICES

Forensic Service - Vehicle Related



Forensic Service
Three Year Statistical Comparison

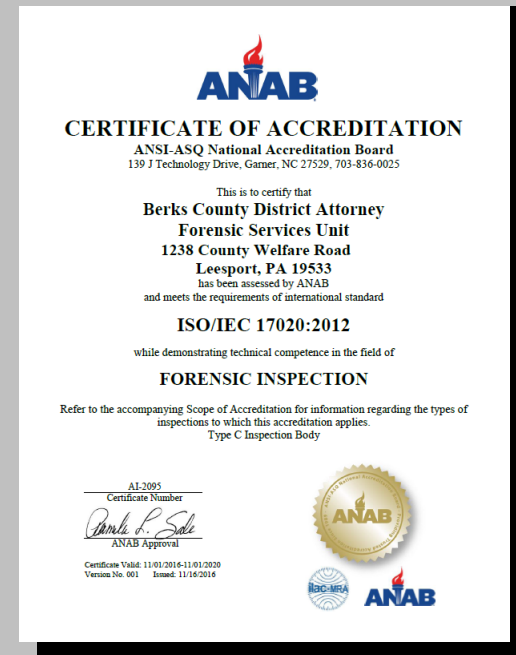


NATIONAL ACCREDITATION

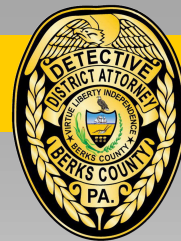
FORENSIC SERVICES

The Berks County District Attorney's Forensic Services Crime Laboratory has met the standards for international accreditation in the field of forensic inspection from the American National Standards Institute – American Society for Quality National Accreditation Board (ANSI-ASQ). The scope of the accreditation included the forensic disciplines of crime scene analysis, computer forensics, and latent fingerprint processing and comparison.

There are over 15,000 forensic laboratories or police science units in the United States and very few are accredited to International requirements. The Berks County District Attorney's FSU is one of only three law enforcement laboratories in the Commonwealth of PA that has been awarded such a prestigious accreditation.



NARCOTIC INVESTIGATIONS



LIEUTENANT
NARCOTICS

SERGEANT
NARCOTICS

SERGEANT
NARCOTICS

DETECTIVE
NARCOTICS

DETECTIVE
NARCOTICS

DETECTIVE
DEA TASK FORCE

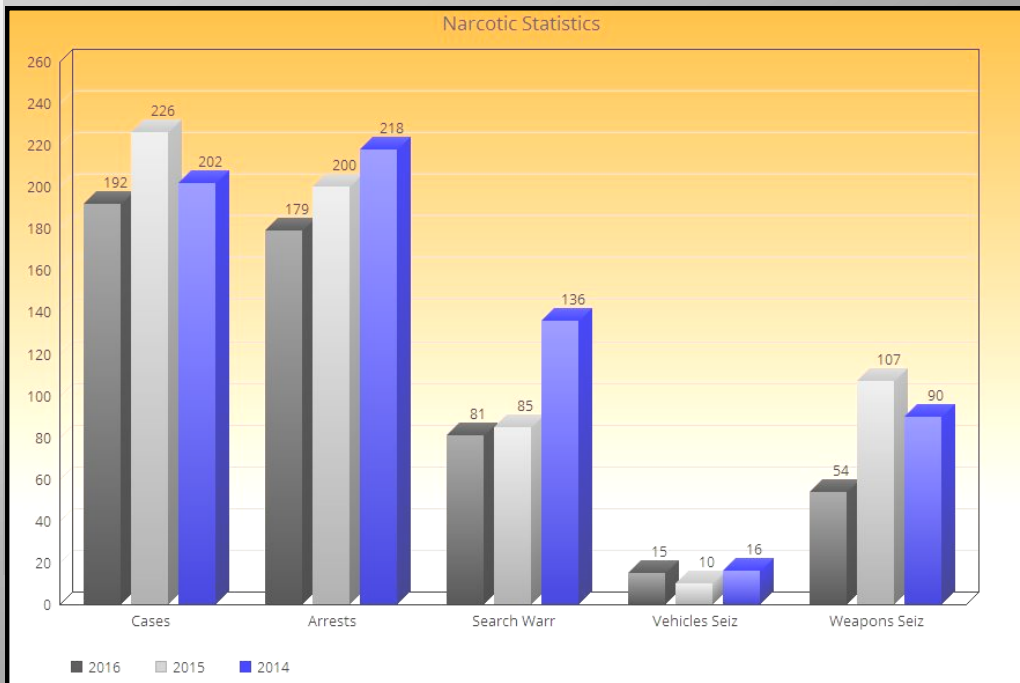
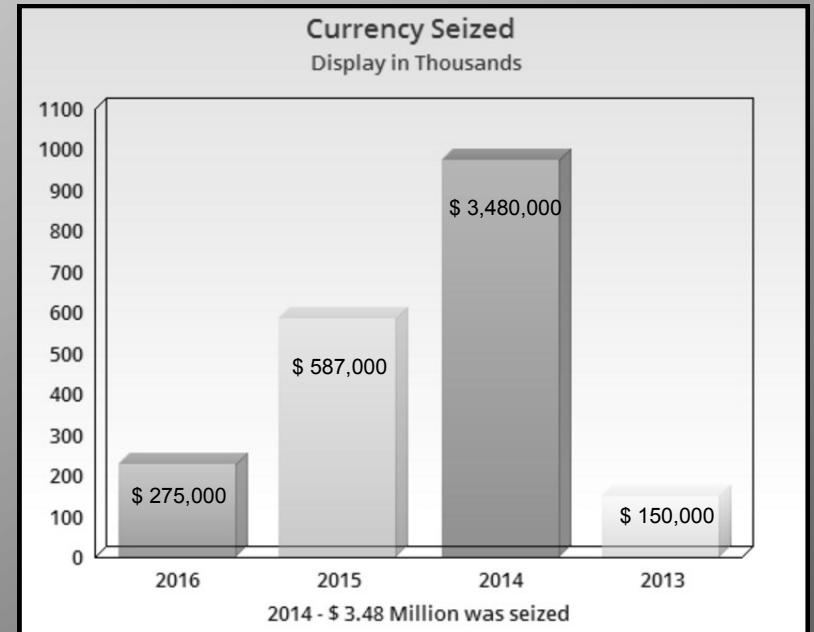
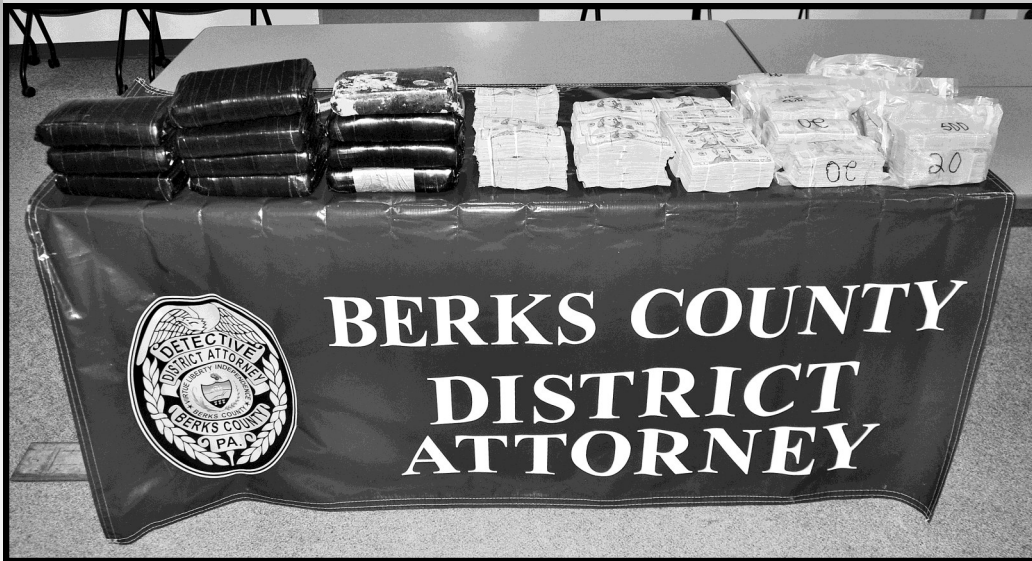
DETECTIVE
AUTO THEFT
TASK FORCE

The Berks County Narcotics Unit is the drug enforcement arm of the District Attorney's Office. This team's mission is to investigate drugs and narcotics trafficking operations, violations of firearms laws, prostitution and human trafficking activities and illegal gambling investigations existing within the City of Reading and the County of Berks. The Berks County Narcotics Unit assists the City of Reading Police Department Vice and Narcotics Section, the Pennsylvania State Police Vice Unit and all local county police departments with drug and violent crime investigations.

The team is supervised by Lieutenant Nelson Ortiz, who reports directly to Chief County Detective Michael Gombar. There are eleven (11) detectives and one civilian Intelligence Analyst which are divided into two groups with Sergeant Todd Harris and Sergeant Pasquale Leporace each responsible for five (5) individuals. One of the detectives is assigned to the Auto Theft Task Force and works with the Pennsylvania State Police and one detective is assigned to the Drug Enforcement Agency.



NARCOTIC INVESTIGATIONS





NARCOTIC INVESTIGATIONS

As the heroin epidemic has become headline news across our nation, the Berks County Narcotics Unit has witnessed its impact on our local community. In 2016, 55% of all drug investigations handled by the Narcotics Unit were heroin cases.

Numerous residents have lost their battle with drug addiction by overdosing on heroin. The District Attorney's Office is committed to reduce the impact heroin has on Berks County. We have increased the number of heroin arrests, educated the public, and implemented drug treatment court to help prevent and combat this serious problem.

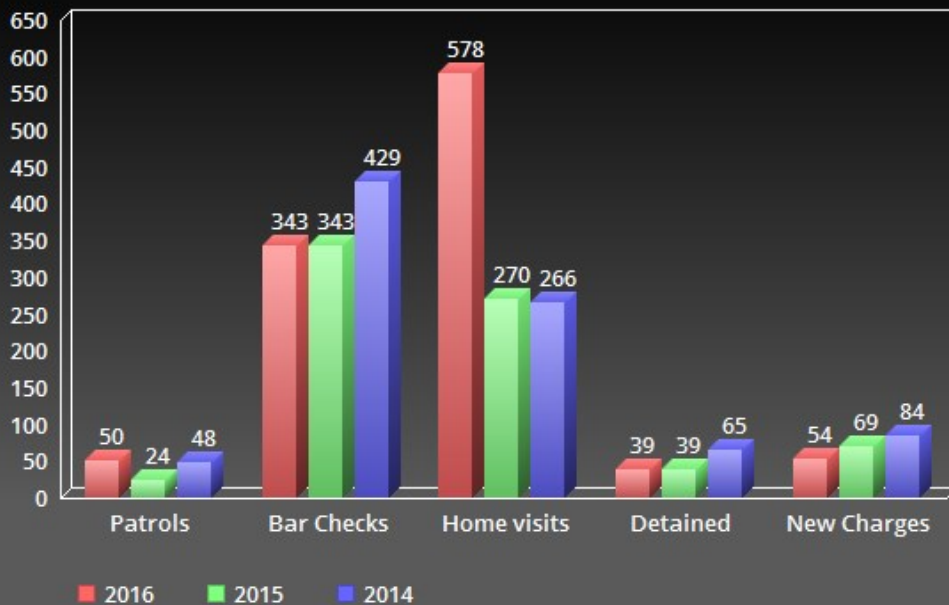


OPERATION NIGHTLIGHT

PROBATION

The mission of the Operation Nightlight is to combine law enforcement efforts with other prevention and intervention programs. The plan pairs probation officers with police officers who together would make unannounced visits to the homes, schools and workplaces of high-risk probationers during non-traditional hours. Bar and after hours business checks were conducted by the team, in an attempt to curb late night violence associated with these types of establishments. By doing this, the officers would not only respond to criminal violations but also take steps to prevent the probationers from violating the conditions of their probation or becoming victims of violence themselves. Operation Nightlight is a joint operation with the Berks County District Attorney's Office, Adult Probation Office, Juvenile Probation Office, Reading Police Department and the Berks County Sheriff's Office. It is the responsibility of Lieutenant Nelson Ortiz to coordinate Operation Nightlight and maintain the scheduling, statistics, and budget.

Operation Nightlight





GRANTS AWARDED

Edward Byrne Grant Law Enforcement Assistance Grant

The Berks County District Attorney's Office has applied for all applicable financial grants to supplement our operating budget. The grants listed below were applied for and awarded in 2016. These grants have allowed the District Attorney's Office to purchase equipment, attend training and pay other associated costs, without affecting the county budget. The Berks County District Attorney's Office was awarded a total of \$15,871 from the Edward Byrne Grant. This is an increase of over \$2,000 from the same grant that was awarded to the District Attorney's Office in 2015. This grant is used for equipment and training for the Berks County District Attorney's Office Criminal Investigations Unit.



Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grant

The Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program (the Coverdell program) awards grants to states and units of local government to help improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner/coroner services. Among other things, funds may be used to eliminate a backlog in the analysis of forensic evidence and to train and employ forensic laboratory personnel, as needed, to eliminate such a backlog.

The Berks County District Attorney's Office has successfully been awarded this grant since 2006. Grants have allowed the unit to acquire equipment and supplies that otherwise would have cost the taxpayer of Berks County in excess of \$342,107.

AWARDS



Reading Eagle: Susan Keen | Gathering before the Crime Alert Berks County annual awards dinner are, from left, Lt. Todd Trupp, Law Enforcement Award; Guido Pichini, President's Award; Carrie Neiswender and Suzy Sands, stand-ins for Albert R. Boscov, who shared the Community Support Award with Jim Boscov; Barry E. Rohrbach, Crime Alert founder; and Eric B. White, Crime Alert vice president.

Courtesy: Reading Eagle Company

CRIME ALERT BERKS COUNTY LAW ENFORCEMENT AWARD

Lt. Todd Trupp was awarded the 2016 Berks County Crime Alert Law Enforcement Person of the Year Award. As a member of the county government's technology committee, Lt. Trupp has been instrumental in implementing technology projects that has put technology at the fingertips of the law enforcement community and improve the sharing of information.

In January, Lt. Trupp spearheaded a coordinated data sharing initiative with other counties in Southeastern Pennsylvania. As a result of that initiative, law-enforcement will have the capability to link resources to create a crime data sharing network across 12 eastern Pennsylvania counties



AWARDS



BERKS COUNTY CHIEFS of POLICE PRESIDENT'S AWARD

Sergeant Robert F. JOHNSON of the Berks County District Attorney's Forensic Services Unit (FSU) initiated and led the FSU's journey to ISO/IEC 17020 (International Organization for Standardization/International Electro-technical Commission) accreditation. The application for accreditation was in the field of forensic inspection from the American National Standards Institute - American Society for Quality National Accreditation Board. Sergeant Johnson began this journey in 2014 and led all team members assigned to the Forensic Services Unit toward this shared goal. In November 2016 the District Attorney's Office was notified that the FSU has met all the requirements and became only the third such accredited law enforcement laboratory in the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania. This achievement, which is a direct result of Sergeant Johnson's vision, initiative, and leadership, represents that the FSU has withstood extensive and comprehensive scrutiny of all areas of its operation and management, and has proven to be a truly professional organization. For this most significant contribution to the advancement of professionalism in law enforcement throughout Berks County and beyond, Sergeant Robert Johnson was awarded the prestigious President's Award of the Berks County Chiefs of Police Association, on December 20, 2016.



AWARDS



BERKS COUNTY DRUG TASK FORCE UNIT CITATION

On March 31, 2016, the Pennsylvania Narcotics Officers' Association honored the Berks County District Attorney's Drug Task Force with the presentation of a "Unit Citation Award" for their outstanding investigative performance in the dismantling of a major methamphetamine drug trafficking organization. This was a joint investigation with PA State Police, Immigration and Customs Enforcement, and was tagged with the operational name, "Operation Ice-Out" ("Ice" is the street name for methamphetamine).

The investigation started in February of 2015 and ended in June of 2015, with the arrest of twenty-four suspects from Berks and Schuylkill counties. During the investigation, thirty-one search warrants were served on the drug trafficker's homes, vehicles and bank accounts. From the search warrants, detectives seized bulk amounts of methamphetamine, cocaine and heroin with a street value of over \$344,000. Additionally, seventy-three firearms with stocks of ammunition, and \$78,000 in U.S. Currency believed to be proceeds from the sale of the controlled substances were seized.

The suspects were charged with delivery of methamphetamine, cocaine and heroin, corrupt organization and criminal conspiracy.

