

Berks County District Attorney's

Annual Report



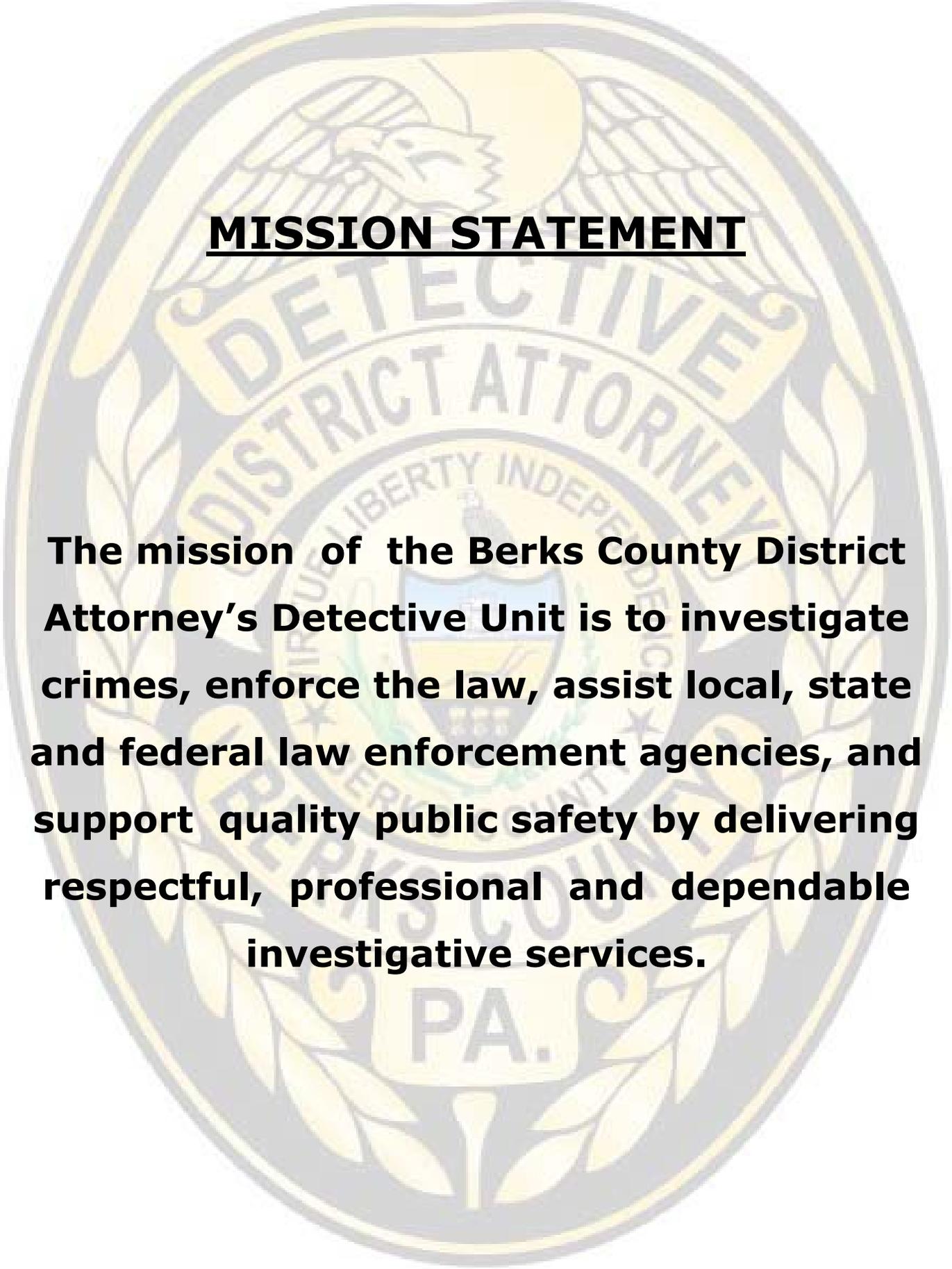
2011

John T. Adams, District Attorney
Michael J. Gombar, Chief County Detective
Lt. Leon Domsic, Narcotics Section
Lt. Todd E. Trupp, Criminal Investigations Section

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The seal of the Berks County District Attorney's Office is a large, circular emblem in the background. It features a central shield with a scale of justice, surrounded by a laurel wreath. The text "BERKS COUNTY DISTRICT ATTORNEY" is written around the inner border, and "PA." is at the bottom. The words "DETECTIVE" and "DISTRICT ATTORNEY" are prominently displayed in the upper half of the seal.

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.

Michael J. Gombar

Chief County Detective

Message From The Chief County Detective

I am pleased to submit the 2011 Annual Report of the Berks County District Attorney's Detective Unit. During this year, we continued to make improvements to help provide the best possible investigative services to our community. Accordingly, this report will provide you with useful information about those improvements and the activities of the Detective Unit.

In 2011, at the direction of District Attorney John T. Adams, we took another concerted effort to expand our crime fighting abilities in Berks County with the formation of a Major Crime Task Force Program. The District Attorney swore in twenty-seven highly trained detectives from fifteen suburban police departments to work with our detectives to solve major crimes, including homicides. Furthermore, the District Attorney has obtained the moral and financial support from Berks County Commissioners Mark C. Scott, Christian Y. Lienbach and Kevin S. Barnhardt for the implementation of this Task Force.

Additionally, District Attorney John T. Adams continued to supplement the needs of the local law enforcement community with financial support from the drug forfeiture account to provide many of the departments of Berks County with equipment and training needed to fight the war on crime.

To conclude, I want to express my sincere appreciation to every member of this Detective Unit for their endless devotion to our mission, which made 2011 another year full of success, growth and accomplishment. I feel blessed and privileged to be the Chief Detective of this unit, which I consider to be one of the finest in our Commonwealth.

Sincerely,

Michael J. Gombar
Chief County Detective



2011 PROGRAMS

In 2011, the Berks County District Attorney's Detective Unit, partnered with the Berks County Solid Waste Authority to collect unused and unwanted prescription medications from residents of Berks County.



Berks County Detectives assisted the Berks County Solid Waste Authority for the annual spring and fall pharmaceutical collections. The spring collection was held at the Exeter Police Department. The fall collection was hosted at First Energy Stadium. A total of 950 residents participated in the events. 2374 pounds of pharmaceuticals were collected at the events. There was no cost to Berks County residents.

The 2011 collection was the most successful to date. The Berks County District Attorney's Office intends to participate in all future collections that directly benefit the residents of Berks County by removing potentially hazardous and dangerous medications from our homes.

2011 SPECIAL EVENTS

Free gun locks were provided to the Berks County District Attorney's Office by State Senator Judy Schwank through Project ChildSafe. This project is a nationwide program whose purpose is to promote the safe handling and storage practice for firearms among all owners through the distribution of key safety education messages and free gun locking devices.

The gun locks were made available to Berks County residents from Senator Schwank's office in the Rockland Professional Building, 1940 N. 13th Street and our office on the 15th floor of the County Services Center.



Berks County Chief Detective Michael J. Gombar shows State Senator Judy Schwank how to install a gunlock.

*Photo from Reading Eagle: Ryan McFadden

2011 SPECIAL EVENTS



Detectives from the Berks County District Attorney's Office routinely attend special community events to promote the services we provide to the citizens of Berks County. Below is a list of the special events attended by the Berks County Detectives.

- **National Night Out**, Spring Township Police Department, August 2, 2011
- **National Night Out**, West Reading Police Department, August 2, 2011
- **Berks Connections—BCPS Annual Softball Tournament**, June 8, 2011
- **City of Reading Holiday Parade**, Reading, PA, November 27, 2011.





Major Crime Task Force

District Attorney John T. Adams has made a commitment to support the needs of the Berks County law enforcement community. In furtherance of this, the District Attorney has made a concerted effort to expand the crime fighting abilities of Berks County police departments by cross-designating police officers from police departments throughout Berks County as Berks County Detectives.

In connection with this policy and practice, the District Attorney has now established a Major Crime Task Force Program in Berks County (the "Task Force") to assist in the investigations that seriously impact the lives and safety of the citizens of Berks County in the quest for justice. It is the goal of the Task Force to provide a requesting police department with a pool of highly trained competent sworn police personnel to assist in the investigation of all major crimes including homicide.

The task force consists of 27 detectives from 15 police departments, which include:

**Amity Township Police Department
Berks County District Attorney's Office
Berks-Lehigh Police Department
Bern Township Police Department
Central Berks Regional Police Department
Colebrookdale Police Department
Cumru Township Police Department
Exeter Township Police Department**

**Kutztown Police Department
Muhlenberg Township Police Department
Northern Berks Regional Police Department
Oley Police Department
Spring Township Police Department
West Reading Police Department
Wyomissing Police Department**





Internet Safety Grant

The Verizon Foundation has awarded the Berks County District Attorney's Office a grant totaling \$12,000 to complete the Verizon Training Center located at the Forensic Services Center. Verizon has donated in excess of \$44,000 over the past three years to assist with Internet Safety Training.

Assistant District Attorney Kelly Kline, Detective Heather Rhoads and Detective Chris Erb travel to local schools, and other places in the community to speak to students, parents, and citizens to warn them of the dangers facing us as a result of the Internet.



Berks County District Attorney's Office Sponsored Training



The District Attorney's Office is committed to assisting police personnel in Berks County by hosting several law enforcement related training sessions annually. Lieutenant Todd Trupp, of the Berks County Detectives, was named Chairman of the Fraternal Order of Police Lodge 71 Training Committee, by District Attorney John T. Adams and FOP President Joseph Brown. In 2011, 202 law enforcement officers from Berks County received free training in the courses listed below.

- September 12-14, 2011— Digital Photography for Law Enforcement
- June 14-16, 2011 — Standardized Field Sobriety Testing
- October 3-5, 2011— Blood Spatter Analysis
- October 17-21, 2011— 40 Hour Evidence Technician Course
- October 24-26, 2011— Hidden Assets in Commercial Vehicles
- November 17, 2011 — Interviewing Victims and Witnesses
- November 17, 2011 — Improving Vehicle Patrol: Officer Safety and Awareness



Digital Photography for Law Enforcement

For the third consecutive year, the Berks County District Attorney's Office hosted a Digital Photography for Law Enforcement Course. The course was designed to assist qualified police officers in achieving a level of proficiency to successfully complete essential crime scene, close-up, investigative, and surveillance photographic assignments. This proficiency will come as a result of in depth classroom instruction followed by hands on use of a digital camera package supplied by the Berks County District Attorney's Office. Upon completion of the exercises, the students had the knowledge to properly transfer and save the captured images for evidentiary use and ultimately prepare images for courtroom presentation.

District Attorney John T. Adams provided funding for the equipment utilized in this course. Each two man team retained possession of the photographic equipment for their respective police departments. In many cases, this equipment was a vast upgrade to the photographic equipment they previously used.

The following police departments attended in 2011:

- Amity Township**
- Bally**
- Berks County Coroner's Office**
- Berks County District Attorney**
- Boyertown**
- Cumru Township**
- Muhlenberg**
- Northern Berks Regional**
- Oley Township**
- Spring Township**





40 Hour Evidence Technician Course

The District Attorney's Office with assistance from the Wyomissing Police Department and in conjunction with the Berks County Chiefs of Police Association, sponsored a 40 hour evidence technician course. The course was offered free of charge to police officers in Berks County. This year's course was held for the first time at the Forensic Services Center located at the Berks County Agricultural Center. All officers were trained in all aspects of evidence collection and preservation. The course concluded with the investigation of a mock homicide crime scene.

The following departments attended in 2011:

Berks County District Attorney
Boyertown
Central Berks Regional
Colebrookdale
Cumru
Exeter
Sinking Spring
Hamburg
Muhlenberg
Northern Berks Regional
Pennsylvania State Police
Penn State Berks
Shillington





Blood Spatter Identification

The Berks County District Attorney's Office hosted its second Blood Spatter Identification Course in 2011. The 2011 course was instructed by detectives from the Berks County Detectives. The course consisted of classroom lecture and hands on practical exercises designed to replicate actual crime scenes.

Blood Spatter Identification is one of several specialties in the field of forensic science. The science of bloodstain pattern analysis applies scientific knowledge from other fields to solve practical problems. Bloodstain pattern analysis draws on the scientific disciplines of biology, chemistry, mathematics and physics. If an analyst follows a scientific process, this applied science can produce strong, solid evidence, making it an effective tool for investigators. Students were taught the accepted means of documenting a blood scene through sketching, stringing, and photography.

The following departments attended the three day course:

Berks County District Attorney's Office
Central Berks Regional
Cumru Township
Northern Berks Regional
Pennsylvania State Police
Shillington
Spring Township



BERKS COUNTY DETECTIVES



Criminal Investigations Section

The Berks County Detectives Criminal Investigations Section is broken down into two distinct disciplines, the Crime Unit and Forensic Services. This section is comprised of eighteen detectives led by Lieutenant Todd Trupp.

The Crime Unit investigates allegations involving child abuse (physical and sexual in nature), elder abuse (physical and financial in nature) and major crimes. The Criminal Investigations Section's first line supervisor is Sergeant Gerardo Vega.

In addition to the duties listed above, detectives assigned to this unit handle collateral duties that involve the following disciplines:

- Megan's Law Enforcement
- Homeland Security
- Auto Theft Task Force
- Precious Metals
- Bingo Enforcement
- Berks County DUI Processing Center
- Bad Check Restitution Program

The District Attorney's Detectives assisted both the Spring Township Police Department and Exeter Township Police Department with homicide investigations in 2011. Both investigations were successfully investigated and resulted in arrests within 24 hours of the incident.

2011 was a challenging year for the detectives assigned to the Criminal Investigations Section. The total number of cases investigated overall increased 20%. Child Abuse cases rose 35%.

District Attorney John Adams took a strong stance against contractor fraud in Berks County. As a result, charges were filed in 80 criminal cases against several local contractors, some of which are currently incarcerated in Berks County Jail awaiting trial.

BERKS COUNTY DETECTIVES



Forensic Services

Forensic Services include AFIS (Automated Fingerprint Identification System) Crime Scene Unit, Computer Forensics and Crash Reconstruction. The Forensics Services Section's first line supervisor is Sergeant Robert Johnson.

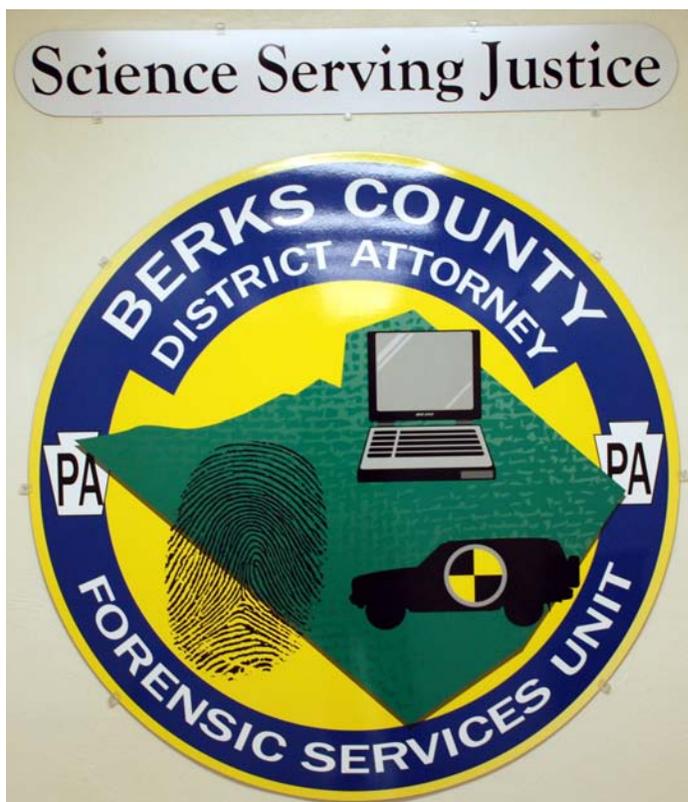
2011 was an exciting year for the Forensic Services Section. The Berks County Board of Commissioners in conjunction with District Attorney John T. Adams, funded renovations to the basement area of the Berks County Agricultural Center. The new location provides greater flexibility for expanded services in addition to providing classroom space for training.

The Berks County District Attorney's Office accepted donated furnishings from X.O. Communications located in Wyomissing, Pa. The donation allowed for us to fully furnish eight offices and a seven cubicle squad room.

In addition, Verizon Communications provided grant money to purchase all the computer equipment and related hardware needed to build a twenty seat computer training facility.

This facility will be used to train law enforcement officers and the public on various topics including internet safety, cyber bullying and electronic records management.

Berks AFIS enjoyed another successful year by identifying suspects in 71 cases. This was accomplished by utilizing advancements in automatic fingerprint identification technology.





Forensic Services

The Berks County District Attorney's Office also participated in the Federal Government's surplus equipment program. This program allows governmental entities to purchase equipment, furnishings and supplies for pennies on the dollar. Shelving, computer work stations, dozens of chairs and other items were acquired utilizing this program.



Verizon Training Center



Forensic Processing Room



Computer Forensics



Forensic Processing Room



Criminal Investigations Section Statistical Comparison

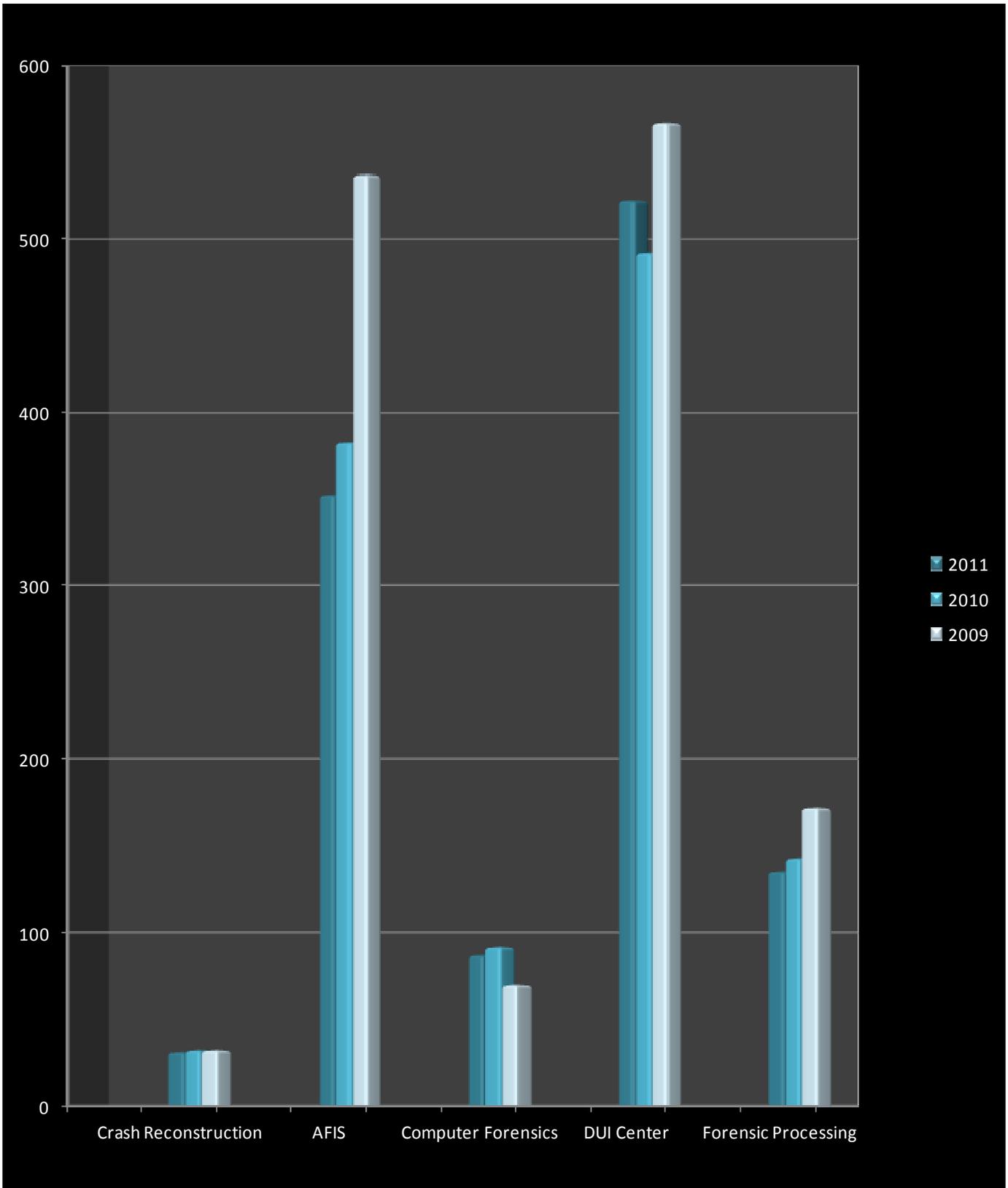
FORENSIC SERVICES

<u>INCIDENT TYPE</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2009</u>
Crash Reconstruction	31	32	32
AFIS (Automated Fingerprint Identification System)	352	383	537
Computer Forensics	87	92	70
DUI Center Bookings	522	492	567
Forensic Processing	135	143	172

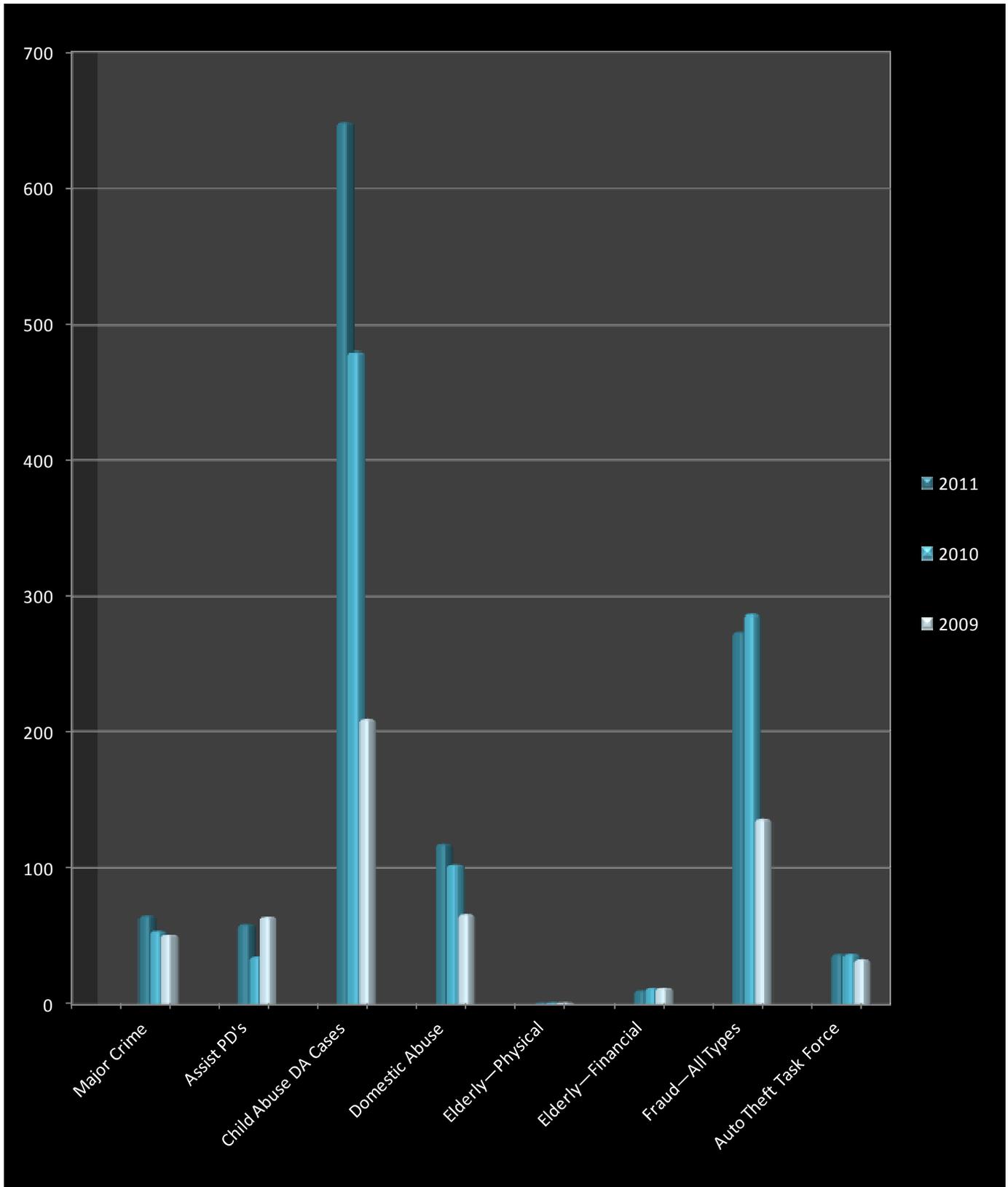
CRIMINAL INVESTIGATIONS

<u>INCIDENT TYPE</u>	<u>2011</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2009</u>
Major Crime	66	54	51
Assist Other Police Departments	59	35	65
Child Abuse DA Cases	649	480	210
Domestic Abuse	118	103	67
Elderly—Physical	2	2	2
Elderly—Financial	10	12	12
Fraud—All Types	274	287	136
Auto Theft Task Force	37	37	33

Forensic Services Chart



Crime Section Chart



Bad Check Restitution Program

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. Millions of dollars are lost every year by merchants as a result of this ongoing problem. 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.

In 2011, the number of bad check offenses in Berks County, as reported to the Bad Check Restitution Program, dropped significantly.

	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>
Restitution Returned	\$68,256	\$56,973	\$39,295
Checks Filed	963	649	694
Victims Filing	258	229	217
Class Attendance	147	132	115

Total Program Satisfaction Rating in 2011 was 4.3 out of 5

Narcotics Section

The Narcotics Unit is committed to investigating and enforcing local, state, and federal laws as they apply to individuals and corrupt organizations that may be responsible for the distribution and manufacturing of illegal controlled substances, illicit or unlawfully possessed firearms within Berks County. This unit is comprised of eleven detectives led by Lieutenant Leon L. Domsic.

In 2011, the Narcotics Unit was involved in many investigations with local, state and federal law enforcement agencies. The Unit continued to work closely with members of the Berks County Drug Task Force to decrease drug activity throughout the County.

The year began with an investigation into a corrupt organization that was involved in Pool Selling and Book Making that was occurring in Berks and Montgomery Counties. Berks County Detectives, the Pennsylvania State Police and other members of the Berks County Drug Task Force conducted this investigation between January 28, 2011 and March 2, 2011. During this investigation search warrants were served in both Berks and Montgomery Counties. On March 31, 2011, arrests warrants were issued for eight individuals for charges including Corrupt Organizations, Pool Selling and Bookmaking and related charges. Over \$200,000 in U.S. Currency and five (5) vehicles were seized during this investigation.

In August 2011, Berks County Detectives arrested six mid-to-high level drug dealers who were distributing large quantities of cocaine, heroin and marijuana in Berks County. Berks County Detectives were assisted by the Pennsylvania State Police, Reading Police, Berks County Sheriff Deputies, and Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) with the execution of five (5) search warrants which seized approximately \$50,000.00 in U.S. Currency, three (3) vehicles and drugs with a combined street value of \$45,000.00.

In late August 2011, Berks County Detectives and members of the Drug Task Force arrested a 53-year-old Reading man ending a three month old investigation involving the trafficking of marijuana in the City of Reading. Detectives executed a search warrant at the residence and the search uncovered approximately 7 pounds of marijuana, \$4,800 in U.S. Currency and three guns. During this investigation, Detectives purchased quantities of marijuana in April, June and August at various locations in the City of Reading.

In October 2011, Berks County Detectives seized more than 10,000 packets of heroin as a result of a month long investigation involving three high level drug dealers from New York City who were trafficking the heroin into the Reading and Berks County area. The investigation started in the month of September and ended with the arrest of three individuals from the Bronx. The three were also responsible for dealing quantities of heroin to Berks County Detectives on three different times and locations. At the time of their arrest, a total of 300 grams of heroin was seized with a street value of \$103,500.00 in U.S. Currency. The Pennsylvania State Police Narcotics Investigators and an agent with the Federal Immigration and Customs Enforcement Agency assisted with this investigation.



Photo from Reading Eagle: Ryan McFadden

Narcotics Section

Statistical Comparison

<u>Statistics for the year</u>	<u>2009</u>	<u>2010</u>	<u>2011</u>
Number of open cases:	165	162	217
Number of arrests:	158	178	134
Number of search warrants served:	22	84	58
Number of vehicles seized:	9	20	18
Total value:	\$71,000.00	\$74,600.00	\$135,000.00
Number of cash seizures:	10	48	24
Total value:	\$14,829.000	\$174,398.50	\$160,115.87
Total number of weapons seized:	12	40	16

Operation Nightlight

The thrust 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. 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 Adult Probation Office, Juvenile Probation Office, Reading Police Department and the Berks County Sheriff's Office. It is the responsibility of Lieutenant Leon Domsic to coordinate Operation Nightlight and maintain the scheduling, statistics, and budget.

	2009	2010	2011
Number of Patrols	66	53	52
Contacts under supervision	1056	718	493
Number of Home Visits	892	673	724
Detained on Parole Violations	16	6	19
Detained	19	10	5



Recruitments - Retirements



Detective Pasquale Leporace joined the District Attorney's Detective Unit in July of 2011. He is assigned to the Narcotics Unit, where he investigates drug trafficking, prostitution and illegal gambling. Detective Leporace served eighteen proud years with the Reading Police Department.



Detective Albert D. Schade III joined the District Attorney's Detective Unit in September of 2011. He is assigned to the District Attorney's Forensic Unit, where he will participate in major crime investigations. Detective Schade is a forensic fingerprint expert. He previously served ten years with the Reading Police Department.



Detective Michael D. Fick joined the District Attorney's Detective Unit in October of 2011 after serving twenty eight years with three different Berks County Police Departments. Those departments included Shillington, Central Berks and Kenhorst. He is assigned to the Crime Unit, where the majority of his duties focus on child physical and sexual abuse. Additionally, Detective Fick will serve as a crisis negotiator for the Berks County Emergency Response Team.

Berks County District Attorney's Office

Criminal Investigations Section

Memoriam



Marc W. Creary

July 24, 1957 – December 12, 2011

In 2011, we suffered the loss of one of the most professional and dedicated members of the Forensic Detective Unit, Marc W. Creary. His thirty-two year career in law enforcement was decorated with numerous accolades and accomplishments. He was highly regarded by his colleagues and the law abiding citizens of Berks County. His expertise and passion in forensic investigations will be greatly missed.

May Detective Creary forever rest, in truth, in pride, in peace and in honor. We will not forget.

Grants Awarded

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 2011. These grants have allowed us to purchase equipment, attend training and pay other associated costs, without effecting the county budget.

Justice Assistance Grant

The Berks County District Attorney's Office was awarded a total of \$18,613.00 from the Federal Justice Assistance Grant. This grant is used for overtime, equipment, training for investigative needs for the Berks County District Attorney's Office Crash Reconstruction Task Force, as well as overtime for Operation Nightlight Details.

2011 Coverdell Forensic Science Grant

The Paul Coverdell Forensic Science Improvement Grants Program awards grants to states and units of local government to help improve the quality and timeliness of forensic science and medical examiner 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. In 2011, the Berks County District Attorney's Office applied and was awarded in excess of \$75,000 dollars to purchase equipment for our Forensic Services Section. The equipment will be used for Crime Scene Management, Crash Reconstruction and Computer Forensics.

Verizon Internet Safety Grant

The Berks County District Attorney's Office received one grant totaling \$12,000 from the Verizon Foundation. The grants were awarded to further develop programs involving Internet safety for the citizens of Berks County and to complete the Verizon Training Center.

Grants Awarded

SANE - Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner

The Berks County District Attorney's Office received grant funding that was used to purchase photography equipment for the Sexual Assault Nurse Examiner Program for two area hospitals. The Reading Hospital Medical Center and St. Joseph's Hospital each received a digital camera package that will be utilized to aid in the collection of photographic evidence needed to effectively investigate and prosecute sexually related crimes.



District Attorney John T. Adams donates a Nikon Digital Camera to Tracy Davidheiser, SANE Nursing Coordinator at the Reading Hospital Medical Center. Michelle Trupp, ER Nursing Director and Dr. Charles Barbara, ER Director, were also in attendance.

Photo: Reading Eagle Company

From left, Lt. Todd E. Trupp, Berks County District Attorney's Office, donates a high-resolution camera to SANE nurse Cindy Zimmerman, RN, and ED Clinical Manager Sandy Reedy, RN.



Photo: St. Joseph's Hospital

2011 Table of Organization

CHIEF COUNTY DETECTIVE

Michael Gombar

LIEUTENANT - CRIME

Todd Trupp

LIEUTENANT - NARCOTICS

Leon Domsic

SERGEANT - FORENSICS

Robert Johnson

SERGEANT - CRIME

Gerardo Vega

SERGEANT—NARCOTICS

John Snyder

FORENSIC SERVICES

David Wright
Albert Schade III

CHILD ABUSE

Donna Tothero
Trevor Ritter
Richard Steffie
David McQuate
Ivan Martinez
Michael Fick

CORPORAL —NARCOTICS

Scott Errington

COMPUTER FORENSICS

Heather Rhoads
Christopher Erb

NARCOTICS

Camilla Karns
James Gresh
Edwin Santiago
Douglass Weaver
Joseph Walsh
Nelson Ortiz
Todd Harris
Pasquale Leporace

CRASH RECONSTRUCTION

Nicholas Bolognese

FINANCIAL CRIMES

James Kellett
Robert Heiden

PROPERTY - FORFEITURE

Anthony DeFazio

MAJOR CRIME TASK FORCE

Harold Shenk

AUTO THEFT TASK FORCE

Ronald Linderman