



# ANNUAL REPORT

2021

*Atwater Police Department*



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## MISSION STATEMENT

Our mission is to maintain peace and order through the provision of police services that are of the highest quality and responsive to the needs of the community. We strive to contribute to a wholesome community environment in which individuals may work, play, prosper, raise families, and otherwise pursue their legitimate goals without fear of criminal or civil disorder.

## VALUES STATEMENT

1. Dedication to timely, excellent, and efficient service to the community.
2. Honest and ethical behavior by the members of this agency.
3. Being the best that we can be.
4. Innovative, creative, and proactive approaches in meeting the demands of our animal control, crime prevention and law enforcement responsibilities.
5. The need to engage in strategic and future planning and to keep abreast of the latest in law enforcement technology and techniques.
6. Sensitivity is the key quality that we should bring to our interaction with the public and other agencies in the criminal justice system with whom we interact.

## Chief's Message

It is a privilege and an honor to present this annual report of the activities of the Atwater Police Department during the Calendar Year 2021. This was a year unlike any other. Change continues to be the dominant theme. The Department has met the challenges presented during 2021 and delivered an elevated level of service to the community.

After completing this third year of service to the community, I feel that together we have accomplished a significant amount despite the challenges presented. 2022 will be a year of challenge and celebration as the city turns one hundred. The Department is poised to adapt to changes in the criminal justice environment. The primary goal for 2022 is to continue to improve the Atwater Police Department and meet the challenges of a new year.

Respectfully Submitted.



Michael Salvador  
Chief of Police  
March 4, 2022

## State of the Department

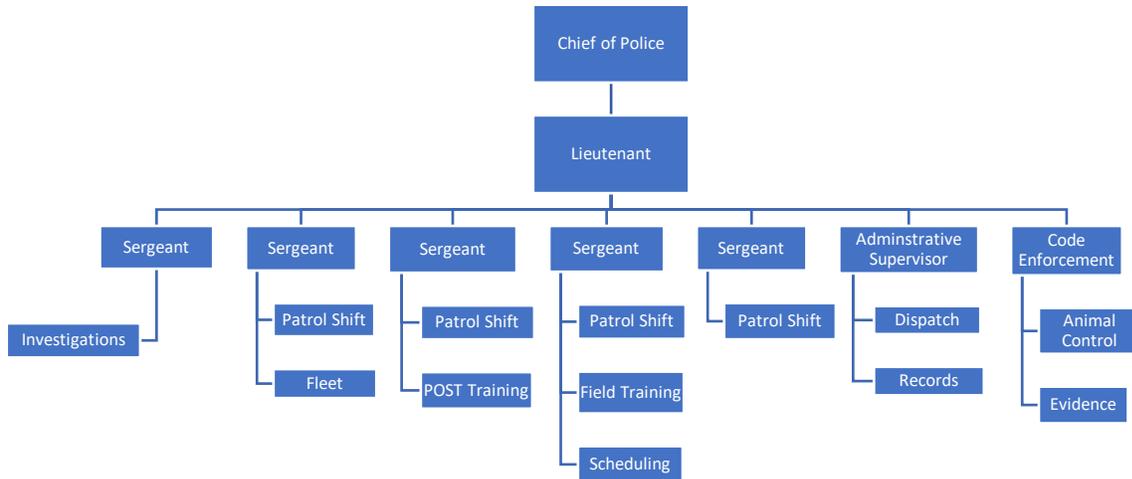
The Atwater Police Department is a full-service law enforcement agency conducting operations 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. The Department has units providing service in animal control, records, investigations, and general law enforcement. The Police Department provides primary 911 communications responsibilities for the City of Atwater.

For calendar year 2021, the Police Department continued to adapt to changes brought on by both the economic and social effects of COVID-19 and the push for criminal justice reform. The year began with a complement of twenty-three full time sworn officers. During the year, the fiscal situation changed due to the mitigation of the COVID situation and the area schools returning to class. FY 2021-2022 budget currently funds twenty-five sworn officers including the Chief. At the end of 2021, the department has two unfilled positions. The ratio of sworn personnel to population is .86 officers per one thousand residents. This is less than the nationwide rate of 1.2 officers per thousand population for Group IV cities in the Western United States (25,000 to 49,999 population). (FBI, 2018) The status of personnel is always a concern facing the Department. The Department's attrition rate during the year was 20% for sworn positions. The Department lost one officer to retirement and two officers to surrounding jurisdictions.

To support sworn operations, the Department employs a mixture of part time and full-time civilian positions. The non-sworn positions provide Dispatch, Clerical, Evidence and Animal Control services. The non-sworn staff continued to change during the 2021 calendar year. The year started with seven non-sworn positions being budgeted as full-time equivalents (FTE's) . During the calendar year, the non-sworn positions were reorganized with the addition of a civilian management position and an addition of a fulltime dispatchers position. On the non-sworn side, one employee was lost to personnel reasons. The Department's attrition rate during the year was 20% for non-sworn. At the end of 2021, all full time non-sworn positions were filled.

The Department's organizational structure was reorganized and enhanced. The Department added a needed fifth sergeants' position to improve and ensure adequate supervision for all patrol shifts. With the FY 22 budget, the Department also added a new lieutenants' position to serve as administration support to the Chief of Police and to serve as second in command in the event of the Chief's absence.

## Atwater Police Department's Organizational Chart



### Budget:

The Police Department is a General Fund Department. Due to the nature of Law Enforcement, it is a resource consumer not a self-sufficient activity. The adopted FY 21-22 budget of the Police Department in the General Fund is six million dollars. This constitutes 35% of the City's General Fund Budget. The total Police Department budget is 8.3 million dollars.

Revenues to support law enforcement activities come from a variety of sources. In 2013, the residents of Atwater passed "Measure H" a ½ cent Sales Tax Measure to enhance public safety. The Police Department was allocated 1.6 million of the proceeds of this dedicated sales tax in FY 2022. The Department also receives approx. \$650,000 in resources from a Community Facilities District, various grant programs, and the Merced County abandoned vehicle program. The Department regained its supplemental funding for two police officer positions that are now deployed to the Merced Union High School district. The Department participates in several grant programs to provide needed equipment. Justice Assistance Grants and Body Armor funding from the Federal Government are used on a yearly basis.

The Department continues to emphasize budget management.

#### Facilities:

The Police Department is located at 750 Bellevue Road in a wing of City Hall. This facility was constructed in 1966 and houses 911 communications center, records, patrol operations, animal control, administration, and code enforcement. The Police Department has two satellite locations that supports its mission. The investigations unit operates from a police substation that is a wing of fire station forty-two adjacent to Buhach Colony High School. The Police Department also continues to utilize a secure fenced area and Conex box at the Public Works Yard as an evidence storage facility.

There was noteworthy progress to address infrastructure issues during 2021. Replacement of the Environmental systems in the spring of 2021 have addressed cooling the building in the summer and heating the building in the winter. Reallocation of space within the current footprint added space and improved the evidence room, increased locker room place, and provided new and more efficient workspaces. The flooring was replaced to eliminate the duct tape trip hazards. Modern furniture and employee lockers make the current space more usable. These measures provided short term solutions to infrastructure issues.

The building is still 50+ years old and needs significant modernization that the Department does not have the resources for. A long-term solution to the Police Department's infrastructure is needed that brings the entire department under one roof to maximize its effectiveness.

#### Fleet:

The Police Department uses a mixture of unmarked and marked vehicles to accomplish its various missions. At the beginning of the year there were twenty-three vehicles in the Department's fleet. The average age of fleet assets was 9 years. The Department instituted a new fleet management program leveraging its new records management system. This will provide the information necessary to properly maintain and protect fleet assets. The Department also contracted with Enterprise Rent a Car to lease seven vehicles for a period of 4 years in late 2019. Because of COVID, the delivery of a portion of those vehicles was delayed. The final four vehicles were finally deployed in the second quarter of 2021. At the end of the lease, the vehicles will be returned to Enterprise and replaced with new vehicles. To continue the fleet replacement program, the Department was able to purchase a patrol vehicle using surplus budget authority at the end of FY 20. Due to the shortages in police vehicles, we did not receive the vehicle until September of 2021, and it was not placed in service until October of 2021.

#### Other Equipment:

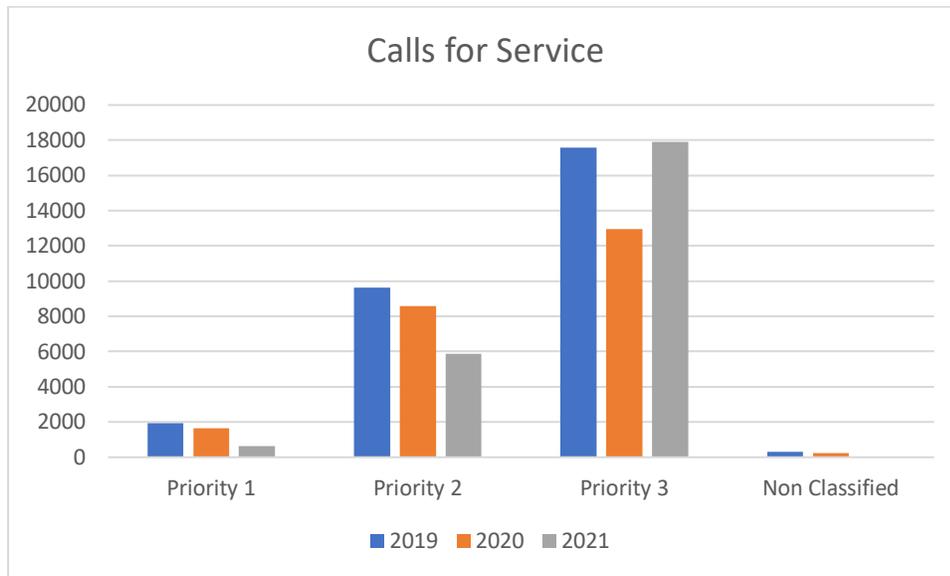
The Police Department possesses a wide range of equipment to fulfill its mission. It has an enough variety of equipment to accomplish any task needed. There are deficiencies in spare equipment to allow for continuity of operations if a piece of equipment is out of service for repair. The Department has perfected the process of inventory control to track the purchase, depreciation, and replacement of Department Equipment. This process has allowed for the Department to purchase needed equipment on time to further the Department's mission. For 2022 the effects of AB481 will pose a challenge to the department's procurement activities.

## Calls for Service Statistics:

The best way to analyze the activity of the Police Department is using raw calls for service data. This data over time shows both activities generated by the public and activity generated by preventative patrol activities. In 2019 the Department handled 29118 calls for service. In 2020 the Department handled 23175 calls for service. In 2021 the Department handled 24438 calls for service. The 2021 calls for service numbers represents a 5.4% percent increase over 2020. This was attributed to the recovery from the effects of the pandemic and the reinstalment of the School Resource Officer Programs at both our High Schools. Another factor is increased officer initiated calls for service related to the impact of homelessness in our community. The following charts and tables break down the comparison by year and by priority. Priority one calls are considered emergencies and should be dispatched within a 3-minute period. Priority two calls are where most citizen-initiated activity is found. Priority three calls are mostly officer initiated.

### CALLS FOR SERVICE STATISTICS

	2019	2020	2021
Priority 1	1939	1642	648
Priority 2	9614	8591	5883
Priority 3	17565	12942	17907
Non Classified	292	226	0
Totals	29410	23175	24438



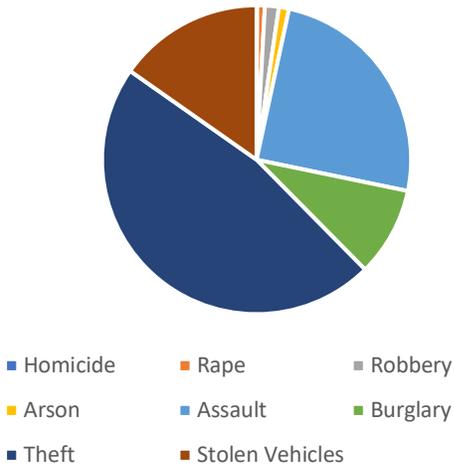
## UCR Crime Statistics

The UCR is the oldest measure of crime reporting in the United States. Developed in the 1920's by the FBI, the report receives its data from victim's reports of crime to law enforcement. The statistics give only general information on crime trends. They can be affected by several variables from the definitions of the categories themselves to human error in crime report completion by law enforcement. Year to year analysis is the most accurate way to use the UCR to predict crime trends.

Comparing 2020 to 2021 there was 21% increase in the total UCR reportable crimes to the Atwater Police Department. This increase is attributed to the lack of consequences for criminal action that can be attributed to the zero bail policies initiated during the pandemic. For every 16.6 calls for service, one UCR reportable crime occurred. The on the next pages are tables and graphic representations of the UCR statistics over the past three years. Crimes against property continues to be the number one crime issue facing the citizens of Atwater today.

This is the last year the Atwater Police Department will use the UCR reporting system to track Criminal activity. Starting in 2022, the department will use the new national incident-based reporting system to track criminal statistics and report them to the FBI and Cal DOJ.

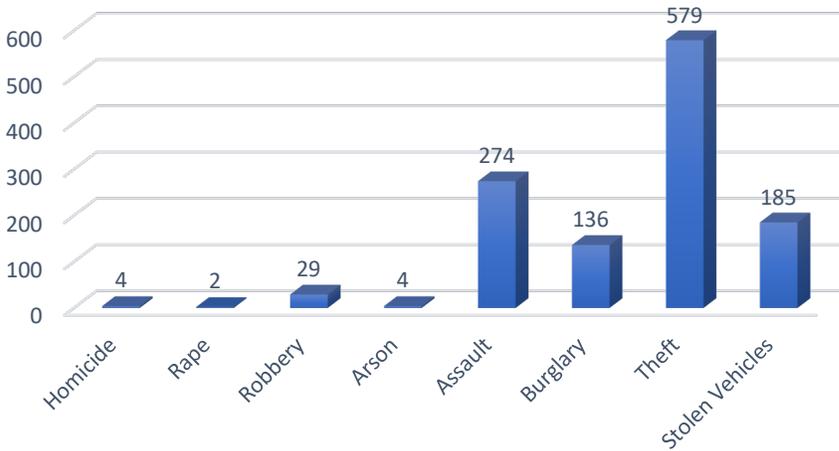
### 2019 UCR Crime Statistics



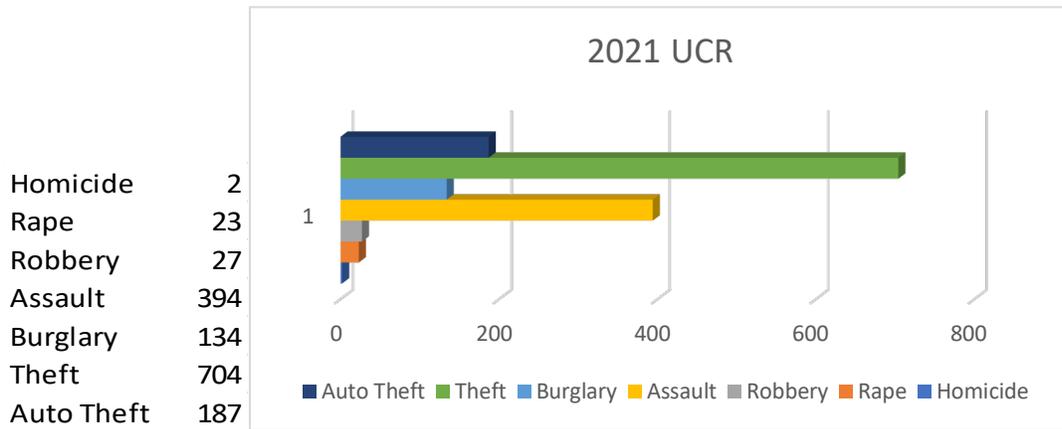
2019

Homicide	1
Rape	12
Robbery	22
Arson	16
Assault	375
Burglary	141
Theft	711
Stolen Vehicles	230
Totals	1508

### 2020 UCR



2021

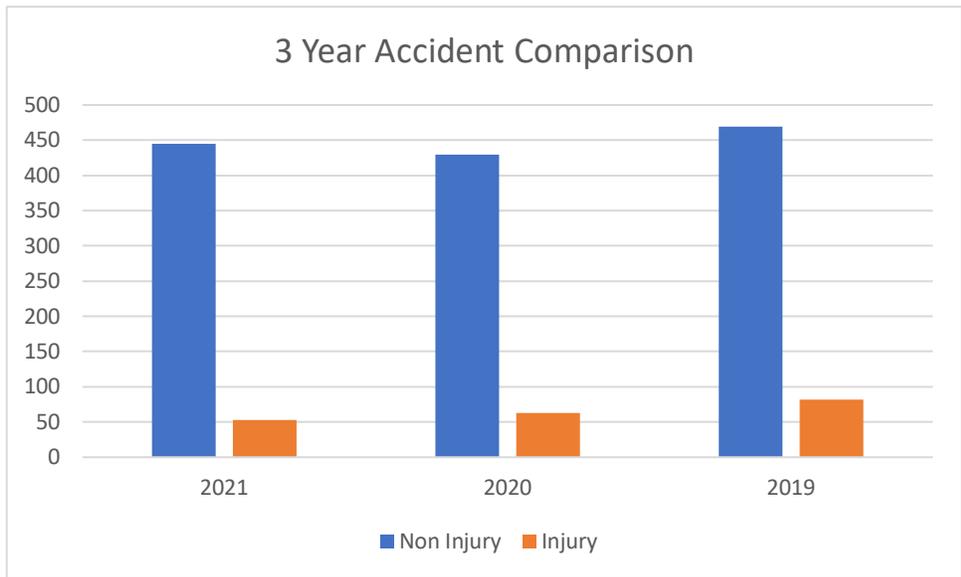
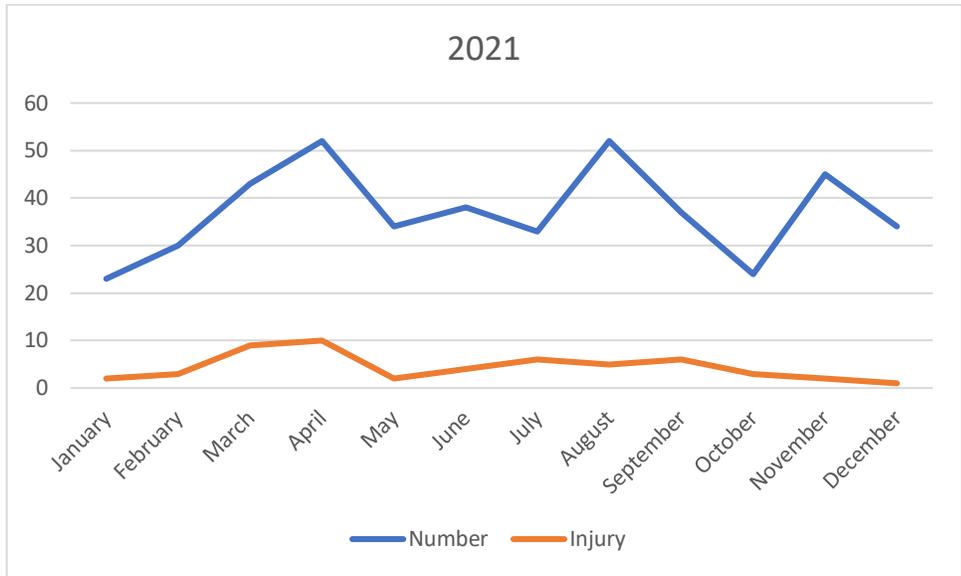


The number of reported property crimes represent 69% of the number reportable crimes to the Police Department and majority share of the UCR Statistics. The total number of UCR reportable crimes in the city are up 21% over 2020 from 1213 to 1471 reports. Our residents are reporting suspicious and criminal activity at rates commensurate with the City's Population and activity level. Crimes against property are also up 17.2 % over last year. This increase can be related partially to a lack of accountability due to the perceived lack of incarceration occurring with the current zero bail policy.

The Department has taken an aggressive stance to attempt to alter the numbers. Besides proactive patrol and apprehension activities, the Department has conducted operations that have targeted gang members, persons on probation and persons on parole. The Department has also supported neighborhood watches throughout the city to provide information and help to residents to protect themselves.

## Traffic Accident Statistics

The Atwater Police Department is responsible for traffic enforcement for the City of Atwater. Besides the common writing of citations for traffic violations, the Department responds to and investigates all the traffic accidents that occur in the city. The city continues to average a traffic accident per day during a calendar year. In 2021, the total number of investigated traffic collisions in Atwater increase approximately 3.4% from 430 in 2020 to 445 in 2021. The number of injury vehicle accidents decreased by 14.3% from 63 in 2020 to 54 in 2021. The below graphs give a visual representation of the traffic accident activity for 2021 and a comparison of the last 3 years. Reasons for the decline all revolve around the effects of increased public awareness and traffic enforcement in the form of a part time motor officer. The major cause of these accidents are inattention and failure to follow posted traffic signs.



## Animal Control Statistics

The Atwater Police Department is responsible for the animal control function for the city. Captured animals are housed at an animal control facility owned by the Merced County Sheriff's Office. By contract, the County shelters captured animals and collects fees fines and forfeitures for the Police Department

Regarding animal control equipment, the unit has needs that will be filled in future budget years. The department has begun the process of replacing animal control equipment. Items that will need to be addressed is the animal control truck, catch poles, and other animal control items to make the unit even more efficient.

Regarding calls for service: The Unit handled 849 animal control calls for service for 2021. That averages to be 2.32 calls per day. Sixty percent of calls for service on the average ended in some sort of enforcement action by Animal Control Officers The other 40 % of the calls received by the Department were either cancelled by the caller, the animal was unable to be located, or we were returning animals to their owners.

Due to the contract with Merced County, the city is also responsible for animal turned in by Atwater residents to the shelter. In 2021, Atwater residents surrendered approx. 494 animals to the shelter while the Police Department sheltered approx. sixty-nine animals .

## School Resource Officer Program

The Department renewed a partnership with the Merced Union High School District to provide law enforcement services to both Atwater and Buhach Colony High School. Since all the educational institution's cross jurisdictional lines, the Police Department personnel team up with probation officers from the Merced County Probation Office to accomplish the mission. Some of the services provided to the district were:

1. Criminal Investigations
2. Outreach to Students
3. School Safety Presentations
4. Attendance at Sporting Events
5. Attendance at other District Events
6. Traffic and Patrol functions around the schools

SRO's Statistics in the first part of the 21-22 school year were as follows:

Calls for Service:	312
Traffic Stops:	69
Reports Taken:	96
Citations Issued:	15
Arrests Made:	29

## Code Enforcement

The Atwater Police Department oversees the responsibilities of Code Enforcement for the City. Responsibilities of blight enforcement, city ordinance enforcement, home encampment monitoring, shopping cart abatement and abandoned vehicle enforcement were consolidated in this unit. The unit handled approx. 3000 calls for service regarding a variety of blight issues. The Unit issued 198 notices and citations to violators. The result of these enforcement actions was a 90% compliance percentage that improved the overall look of the city. The unit also handled 362 abandoned vehicle calls the generated 32 reports with 32 vehicles stored. These activities are a valuable revenue source that offsets the cost of providing the service.

The unit was reorganized and augmented by assigning the Department's CSO's to the unit to bolster the ability to handle cases. Code enforcement also assumed the animal control role as a part of the reduction of blight process.

The unit also provided service in the following areas:

1. Daily citizen phone calls for information, explanation, or direction for non-cases.
2. Generation of new documents, innovative programs, and processes for the Code Enforcement program.
3. Misc. meetings with Building, Planning, and various City of Atwater Departments for projects.
4. Displaced Citizen monitoring, contact and data collection.

## Strategic Plan

In 2019 Department unveiled a 3-year strategic plan that was designed to address the many issues facing the Police Department. At the end of 2021, over 90% of the plan had been accomplished on time and within current budget resources.

In the personnel area, the Department has made noteworthy progress in four of the five target areas. Recruitment and promotional policies have been modified and are being handled by third parties to improve both professionalism and accountability. Training has been redirected to focus on Department needs. Supervision training continues to make them better suited to handle their positions and prepare them for career advancement. At the end of 2021, Department reorganization has been completed and its command structure is set.

On the infrastructure portion of the plan, the Department completed a project that reallocated floor space at headquarters. This project expanded the evidence room providing a more efficient workspace, expanded and improved locker room facilities for all employees, provided for better designed workspaces for Sergeants, officers and Admin. This project buys some time while a more permanent solution is devised.

The fleet portion of the Strategic Plan continues to improve with the purchase of additional fleet assets. The average age of the fleet continues to be reduced and the fleet is beginning an orderly retirement of assets. Policies on fleet replacement are in place and the Department will continue the process in the 2023 fiscal year. Due to the shortages and long lead times caused by the effects of supply chain issues, The Department will need to work with the City Manager and Council to obtain preapproval to purchase police cars if vehicles become available due to rejected contracts for other jurisdictions.

In 2021 the Department fielded a state of the art 911 system that harnesses not only voice calls, but it can handle emergency requests by text message.

## Department Goals

The Department has several goals for 2022. Fundamental changes are occurring to the profession that will redefine what law enforcement is and how its effectiveness is measured. The Department has introduced the National Incident Based Reporting System. This will change the way crime statistics are reported and replace the Uniform Crime Report. Starting January 1 officers are now required to collect racial and identity data on most citizen contacts. That data will be reported to the State monthly.

New laws will affect our way of delivering service to the community. Police accountability laws that took effect on January 1 will put more pressure on supervision to monitor the work product, and certain investigations that would be handled in house will now be monitored by the state. Sustained officer misconduct under certain circumstances can lead to having peace officer authority of police officers taken away by the State irrespective of any disciplinary action taken by the jurisdiction. Even the equipment that police officers use in certain circumstances will now be regulated by law and have a transparency component to our community.

The Department continues a 2021 goal to propose and complete construction infrastructure projects during 2022 that will eventually place the entire Department under one roof and fulfill a promise to the community to have an eastside substation.

The Department will field a new e-citation system and expand its body worn camera program.

Staffing issues will continue as COVID protocols will affect the number of employees available to work on a given day. A looming issue is the status of the current voter approved funding source. A loss of this funding would significantly affect the Departments ability to provide the service the community values.

Work will begin on a new Department strategic plan to meet the challenges of the next 5 years

Finally, to achieve these goals and meet other unexpected challenges, the Atwater Police Department continues to be efficient with City funds and work with the community to solve problem and ensure its safety.

## References

FBI. (2018). *Crime in the United States*. Washington DC: FBI.