



# ANNUAL REPORT

2023

*Atwater Police Department*



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

MISSION STATEMENT _____	3
CHIEF'S MESSAGE _____	4
STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT _____	5
CALLS FOR SERVICE STATISTICS: _____	9
CRIME STATISTICS _____	10
TRAFFIC ACCIDENT STATISTICS _____	11
ANIMAL CONTROL STATISTICS _____	12
SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER PROGRAM _____	12
CODE ENFORCEMENT _____	13
STRATEGIC PLAN _____	13
DEPARTMENT GOALS _____	15
REFERENCES _____	16

## 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 2023. I will be forever grateful to the community for its continued support of the Police Department in a challenging criminal justice environment. This was a year of continued change. The Department has met the challenges presented during 2023 and delivered an elevated level of service to the community.

After completing this fifth year of service to the community, I feel that together we have accomplished a significant amount despite the challenges presented. 2023 was a foundational year at the Police Department. The Department continues to adapt to changes in the criminal justice environment both in service delivery and recruitment retention. The primary goal for 2024 is to continue to improve the Atwater Police Department and meet the challenges of a new year.



Respectfully Submitted.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Salvador". The signature is written in a cursive style.

Michael Salvador  
Chief of Police  
February 12, 2024

## STATE OF THE DEPARTMENT

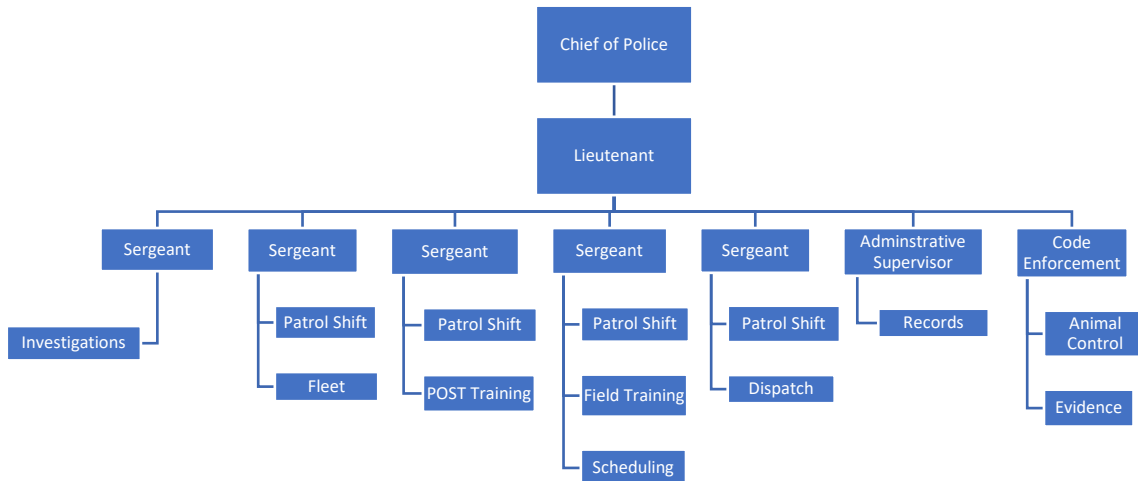
The Atwater Police Department is a full-service law enforcement agency conducting operations 24 hours a day, 365 days per year. The Department has units providing services in animal control, code enforcement, records, investigations, and general law enforcement to a population of 31,978 residents. The Police Department provides primary 911 communications responsibilities for the City of Atwater.

For the calendar year 2023, the Police Department continued to adapt to changes brought on by both the economic and social effects of the post pandemic world and the push for criminal justice reform. FY 2023-2024 budget currently funds twenty-eight sworn officers including the Chief. At the end of 2023, the department has two unfilled positions. The ratio of funded sworn personnel to population is .78 officers per one thousand residents. This is less than the statewide rate of 2.2 officers per thousand population. (FBI, 2022) The status of personnel is always a concern facing the Department. The Department's attrition rate during the year was 8% for sworn positions. That was a marked improvement over previous years and the lowest during my tenure. The Department lost one officer to disciplinary action and one to a service retirement during the past year. The average tenure of a Police Department employee is less than three years.

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 2023 calendar year. The year started with 10.5 non-sworn positions being budgeted as full-time equivalents (FTE's). During the calendar year, the non-sworn positions were reorganized enhanced with the addition of a code enforcement position, records staff, and an addition of two full-time dispatcher positions raising the number to fourteen non-sworn. The Department's attrition rate during the year was 0% for non-sworn. At the end of 2023, all full time non-sworn positions were filled.

The Department's organizational structure did not change during 2023. Next is the Department's organizational chart.

## 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 23-24 budget of the Police Department in the General Fund is 6.3 million dollars. This constitutes 28.3% of the City's General Fund Budget. The total Police Department budget is 9.4 million dollars.

Revenues to support law enforcement activities come from a variety of sources. In 2022, the residents of Atwater passed "Measure B" a one cent Sales Tax Measure to enhance public safety. The Police Department was allocated 2.4 million dollars of the proceeds of this dedicated sales tax in FY 2024. 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 continued its partnership with the Atwater Elementary School District and deployed an officer to service the District with partial offsetting revenue from the 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 looking for any cost savings available to provide diverse service to the community.

#### 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, investigations, and code enforcement. The Police Department has a satellite location that supports its mission. The Police Department utilizes 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 2023. During the year, the department reallocated space on the southside of the building that was once occupied by City admin. A new conference room was constructed, the offices were refinished, and ADA doors installed, These measures provided a short-term solution to a specific infrastructure issue.

The investigations unit completed its relocation to headquarters. Projects to renovate the space and construct a new interview room are ongoing and should be completed in the first quarter of 2024.

The building is still 50+ years old and needs significant modernization to allow for the Police Department to effectively use the additional space that was made available to the Department in 2022. The building does not comply with ADA, essential service standards, and does not possess 21<sup>st</sup> century infrastructure. This needed renovation allows time for the Department to participate in the Public Safety master planning process. This process will identify the deficiencies in the current facility, document the need for a facility that meets all applicable standards, produces a document that would be the basis for the identification of funding sources, and allows for a road map for the community to identify future priorities.

Another facilities project that was started in 2023, was the electric vehicle charging station project at headquarters. In partnership with PG&E and Public Works, the Department plans to construct a vehicle charging depot inside the secure parking lot. This will service the Department's growing fleet of plug-in hybrid and battery electric vehicles. This facility is due to be completed in the first quarter of 2024.

#### 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-seven vehicles in the Department's fleet. The average age of fleet assets was 6 years.

The Department also added a new capability to its fleet. During 2023, the department purchased and deployed its first battery electric vehicles to support its mission. The Department has taken delivery of 4 Ford Lightning pickup trucks. These vehicles have been assigned to administration, code enforcement, and animal control. They are designed to replace older internal combustion engine vehicles. The Department projects that over the 10-year life span of the vehicle, these vehicles will reduce vehicle emissions and reduce total cost of ownership in comparison to a similar internal combustion engine vehicle. These vehicles, added to the 2 Ford

Fusion plug-in hybrids that the Department has, raise the zero-emission vehicle fleet to 25% of the total PD fleet.

The replacement of fleet assets will continue to be a challenge for the Department going forward. The supply chain issues still plague the acquisition of police vehicles and their equipment. Now the Department is at the will of the Automakers. Ordering vehicles from the manufacturer is an arduous process. In 2023, the window to order those vehicles was open for 72 hours with little to no warning. Orders had to be placed in a brief period of time. The wait on these vehicles is now 12 months for the car if the order does not get cancelled. The upfit equipment order, to make the vehicle ready for service, cannot be placed until the car arrives, This adds another 6-8 weeks to the lead time. Two additional weeks for shop time and the vehicle may be ready in up to 18 months for deployment to the streets.

To mitigate this, the Department's last bid for vehicles requested dealers to bid from their current inventory. Even with that lead times are still an issue.

#### Other Equipment:

The Police Department possesses a wide range of equipment to fulfill its mission. It has a wide enough variety of equipment to accomplish any task needed. During 2023, the Department replaced its dispatch radio consoles to bring them in line with current technology. The Department also replaced its aging firearms, Taser conducted energy weapons, and body worn cameras to their latest versions to ensure that issued officer safety equipment is the most modern and effective tools.

The Department's new conference room will give the department video conferencing capability that it has never had. Finally projects to add more video surveillance capabilities have been started and will continue into 2024.

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 the Department to purchase needed equipment in time to further the Department's mission. The issue of the supply chain crisis will challenge future planning for equipment replacement and increase lead times by 100%.

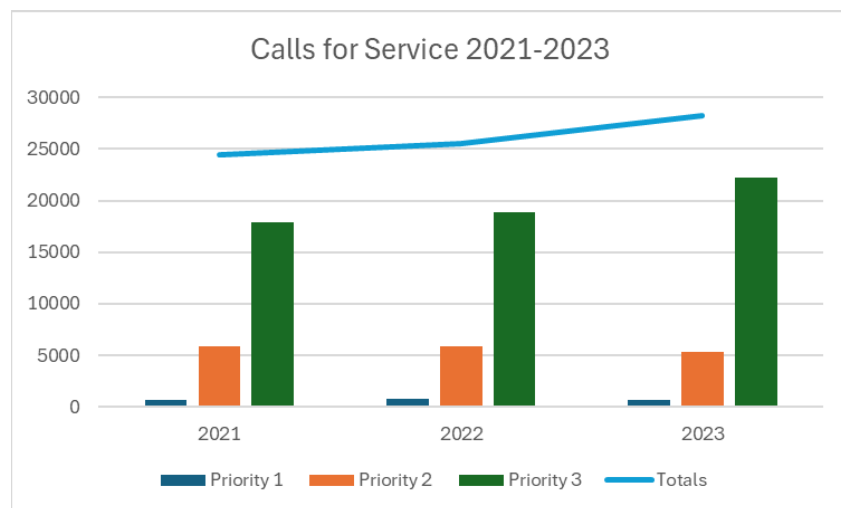


## CALLS FOR SERVICE STATISTICS:

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 2021 the Department managed 24438 calls for service. In 2022 the Department managed 25499 calls for service. In 2023 the Department managed 28208 calls for service. The 2023 calls for service numbers represent a 10.6% percent increase over 2022. The continued growth in the community and the addition of the citizen online portal assisted in the increase. Officer initiated calls for service also increased by 16.6% from 8854 contacts in 2022 to 10324 in 2023. This increase is attributed to the addition of a new code enforcement officer, increased abandoned vehicle abatement, and the increase in contacts with our unhoused population. 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

	2021	2022	2023
Priority 1	648	741	694
Priority 2	5883	5878	5280
Priority 3	17907	18880	22233
Non Classified	0	0	1
Totals	24438	25499	28207



## CRIME STATISTICS

Atwater PD in 2021 made the commitment to begin the conversion to CIBRS with the upgrade of its records management system. In 2022, the Department began to collect data. The data collected is based around the call for service and not the crime type. This data collection method can show numbers that are elevated and make it appear as if there is more criminal activity than is occurring.

On the below is a table documenting the Department's 2023 CIBRS data.

Classification of Offenses	Offenses Reported	Unfounded	Actual Offenses	Tot. Offenses Cleared	Clearances Involving Persons Under 18 Yr. of Age
<b>Murder/NonNegligent Homicide(Total)</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Manslaughter by Negligence(Total)</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Rape(Total)</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>11</b>	<b>1</b>	<b>0</b>
Rape	11	0	11	1	0
Attempted Rape	0	0	0	0	0
<b>Robbery(Total)</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>
Robbery - Firearm	5	0	5	0	0
Robbery - Knife or Cutting Instrument	1	0	1	0	0
Robbery - Other Dangerous Weapon	6	0	6	0	0
Robbery - StrongArm(Hands,Fists,Feet,etc)	12	0	12	4	0
<b>Assault(Total)</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>197</b>	<b>19</b>
Assault - Firearm	40	0	40	10	2
Assault - Knife or Cutting Instrument	9	0	9	7	2
Assault - Other Dangerous Weapon	62	0	62	26	2
Assault - StrongArm(Hands,Fists,Feet,etc)	48	0	48	29	5
Assault - Other(Simple, Not Aggravated)	342	0	342	125	8
<b>Burglary(Total)</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>98</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>
Burglary - Forcible Entry	12	0	12	1	0
Burglary - Unlawful Entry(No Force)	81	0	81	3	0
Burglary - Attempted Forcible Entry	5	0	5	1	0
<b>Larceny(Total) - Theft(Excluding Motor Vehicles)</b>	<b>583</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>583</b>	<b>64</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Motor Vehicle Theft(Total)</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>

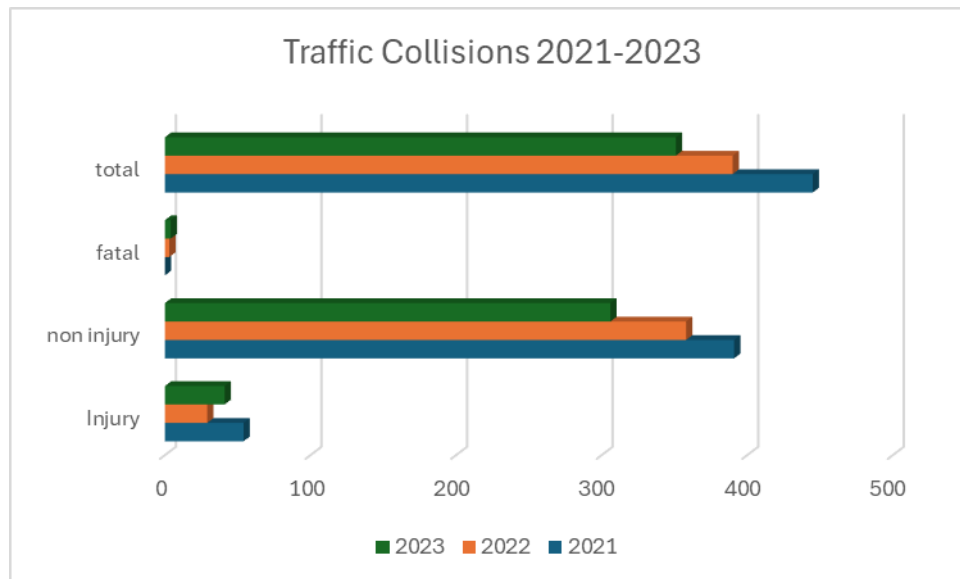
The number of reported property crimes represents 59% of the number of reportable crimes to the Police Department and the majority share of the CIBRS Statistics. Our residents are reporting suspicious and criminal activity at rates commensurate with the City's Population and activity level.

The Department has taken an aggressive stance in attempting 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 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. In 2023, the total number of traffic accidents investigated was 351. This was a decrease of approximately 11.1% from 2022's 390 accidents. This was the first year that the City of Atwater did not average a traffic accident per day in the last 5 years. The number of injury vehicle accidents increased by 41.3% from 29 in 2022 to 41 in 2023. Unfortunately, the Department investigated four fatal traffic collisions that cost six lives.



The number one location for traffic collisions is the intersection of Shaffer Rd. and Bellevue Rd. (aka "Five Corners") with twelve collisions (3%).

Reasons for the continued decline in total traffic accidents all revolve around the effects of increased public awareness and traffic enforcement in the form of a part time motor officer and effective directed patrols. The major cause of 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 received an influx of new equipment. In August 2023, the battery electric pickup was received and was placed into service. This vehicle has proved to be a capable and cost-effective piece of equipment. This unit has addressed some of its non-vehicle equipment needs and is on a stable equipment replacement plan.

Regarding calls for service: The Unit handled 1144 animal control calls for service for 2023. That averages to be 3.1 calls per day. Sixty percent of calls for service on 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.

## SCHOOL RESOURCE OFFICER PROGRAM

The Department renewed a partnership with the Atwater Elementary School District to provide law enforcement services to all the Elementary School Sites for the 22/23 school year. Some of the services provided to the district were:

1. Criminal Investigations
2. Outreach to Students
3. School Safety Presentations
4. Traffic and Patrol functions around the schools

This partnership has continued into the 23-24 school year with district and department collaboration on several infrastructure projects to make the sites, students, and staff safer.

SRO's Statistics in the first part of the 23-24 school year were as follows:

Calls for Service:	464	14.8% increase over 2022.
Traffic Stops:	22	81% decrease
Reports Taken:	120	71% decrease.
Citations Issued:	92	97% decrease.
Arrests Made:	8	75% decrease.

These numbers show that post pandemic our school sites are returning to pre pandemic traffic levels and the ability of the school resource officer to mitigate issues on our school campuses without the use of the criminal justice system.

## 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. 1247 calls for service regarding a variety of blight issues. The Unit issued 1478 notices and citations to violators. The result of these enforcement actions was a 90% compliance percentage that improved the overall look of the city.

These numbers significantly increased in 2023. The cause of the increase was the effect of increased staffing in the Code enforcement unit that allowed for greater capacity to handle a variety of blight issues.

The unit also handled 272 abandoned vehicle calls the generated fourteen reports with 38 vehicles stored. These activities are a valuable revenue source that offsets the cost of providing the service.

The unit was augmented by the addition of a full-time code enforcement officer to the unit to bolster the ability to handle cases.

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 the Department unveiled a 3-year strategic plan that was designed to address the many issues facing the Police Department. In 2023 that plan was extended to 5 years to complete outstanding projects and priorities. At the end of 2023, over 99% 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 practices have been modified to adapt to a changing hiring environment. For the first time in several years, the Department recruited and hired two police officer recruits. The employees were fully outfitted by the Department and sponsored to attend the State Center Community College Police Academy in Fresno. These recruits will complete there academy training in April of 2024. After in-service training, the two officers are expected to be on their own in late July 2024.

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. In 2023 the Department promoted its youngest sergeant to date. This promotion will serve as the first step to prepare the department for the eventual changing of the management guard.

On the infrastructure portion of the plan, the Department was able to fully occupy space at its location that formerly housed City Administration and HR. The renovation of the space began in 2023. It consisted of the expansion of the chiefs office, the construction of a 10 person conference room, new flooring, two renovated offices, and new paint in the renovated area. These spaces add functionality that the department never had.

The Department continued its project to add electric vehicle charging stations at headquarters. Progress was made with PG&E and Public Works. All the equipment was purchased and 95% has been received. The key switch gear is still in transit. Completion of the 6-stall station is estimated to be the spring of 2024.

The fleet portion of the Strategic Plan continues to improve with the purchase of additional fleet assets. The fleet In 2023 the Department, with the assistance of funding from the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, ordered and receive four battery electric vehicles for on duty use. The four Ford 150 Lightning Pickup Trucks were deployed to Code enforcement, Animal Control, and Department Administration. After six months the pilot project has yielded maintenance cost savings close to projections. Concerns over charging and vehicle range have not proved to be accurate. After 5 months of operation the vehicles have proven to be reliable and cost-efficient additions to the fleet. These vehicles will initiate the department to the long-term use of battery electric vehicles and pave the way for the eventual replacement of the entire fleet with Battery Electric or other zero emission Vehicles.

Management of the fleet is becoming more important due to the inability to replace fleet assets as rapidly as was available pre-pandemic. The department is using digital license plates and telematic software to monitor the health of the fleet to provide decision makers with vital information on the health of the fleet.

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 2024 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.

The information technology portion of the strategic plan also received attention during 2023. The department added video conferencing equipment for its new conference room. There was expansion and upgrades to the department's body camera system. The department deployed its first iPad tablets in key areas. A new citizens portal was launched allowing the public to draft reports online and have them processed digitally. Finally, the investigations unit was equipped with dictation and digital search warrant software to increase efficiency and productivity.

The last strategic plan initiative to receive action was officer equipment. The Department purchased and replaced its 10-year-old sidearms with new pistols with advanced red dot sighting systems. These pistols will allow for more efficient and accurate use. They are also easier to operate and easier to train on.

## DEPARTMENT GOALS

The Department has several goals for 2024. Fundamental changes are occurring to the profession that will redefine what law enforcement is and how its effectiveness is measured.

Police accountability laws that took full effect in 2023 have been redefined and the controlling regulations have been modified to comply with the new regulations. The California Agency on Peace Officers Standards and Training (POST) role continues to expand to be one of a regulator not just a facilitator of training for peace officers. POST is demanding compliance with the new regulations and now has the power to remove an officers peace officer status if a department fails to comply with standards. This will affect who can be peace officers, recruitment and retention, and the disciplinary process.

Recruitment effects by the City and the department continue to change to reflect a changing hiring environment. The days of a ready-made candidate pool are gone. The department and the city must be prepared to think creatively and look for innovative ways to attract a new generation to policing.

The Department continues a 2022/2023 goal to propose and complete construction infrastructure projects during 2024 that will allow the Department to efficiently function and expand to meet the needs of the community. Full completion of the south end renovation of 750 Bellevue Rd. is vital to providing the Department with efficient space for the next 5 years.

The Department will complete the deployment of the following systems funded in the FY 23-24 budget: the e-citation system, a drone, in car video to complement body worn cameras, and the installation of license plate reading cameras at two intersections in the city. These initiatives will allow for officers to be more effective in their service delivery.

In 2024 work will commence on a new Public Safety Master Plan. This plan will identify restraints in the public safety system, set priorities for the future of Atwater PD, and set the base for future funding sources to pay for the needed improvements.

To achieve these goals and meet other unexpected challenges, the Atwater Police Department continues to be efficient with City funds, work with the community to solve problems, and ensure that it is prepared to provide the finest service to the residents and visitors to the City of Atwater.

## REFERENCES

FBI. (2022). *Crime in the United States*. Washington DC: FBI.