



Steelhead trout are like people they need pure, clean water and plenty of oxygen and a...

Unfortunately, many cannot supply these since local creeks, str...



clean
staffed.
the binoculars
MORRO BAY
NATIONAL ESTUARY PROGRAM

2021 ANNUAL REPORT



TABLE OF CONTENTS

About MBPD - 3

Chief's Message - 4-5

Budget - 6

Statistics - 7

Operations Division - 8-19

Support Services - 20

Chief's Advisory Committee - 22

Neighborhood Cop - 23

In the Community - 24

Why I Wear The Badge - 26

Staff Recognition - 27

2020 Awards - 28

Retirements - 29

In Memoriam - 30



ABOUT MBPD

The Morro Bay Police Department employs 20 full-time and two part-time employees, this includes 18 sworn officers, two full-time and two part-time civilian employees. These staff members provide service to Morro Bay's community of over 10,500 residents. In addition to full-time employees, the Police Department relies heavily on civilian volunteers to enhance our community's level of services. These volunteers include citizen volunteers, Police Chaplains, and Police Explorers.

OUR MISSION

Provide the highest level of police services in partnership with our community.

VISION

Excellence in Service.

ORGANIZATIONAL VALUES

- We will be accountable to ourselves, the public and the law enforcement profession.
- We will be open through our communication within the department and with the community of Morro Bay.
- We will be ethical, honest, and courageous, both on and off duty.
- We will respect the rights and dignity of all people.
- We will continue our commitment to innovation and creativity when problem solving.
- We will practice fairness and consistency in our actions.
- We will exemplify professionalism, excellence, and high-quality public safety services.
- We will remain committed to teamwork within the department and with the community to maintain the finest public safety services on the central coast.



MESSAGE FROM THE CHIEF



Greetings to our Morro Bay community. The Morro Bay Police Department is pleased to present this Annual Report for the year 2021. This report is provided to our community to give an inside look at the internal workings, divisions and people who make up our organization, and to outline some of the amazing work they do to keep our community safe. Our staffing consists of both Sworn and Non-Sworn personnel, Community Volunteers, youth Police Explorers, and members of our Police Chief's Advisory Committee.

All the people outlined in this report have made considerable contributions to the success of this organization and we could not achieve our goals without their continued support, dedication, and commitments. I personally thank each and every one of them for working toward our department vision of "Excellence in Service" and for striving to "Represent Well" in all that we do.

2021 was another challenging year for the Morro Bay Police Department and the Law Enforcement profession. With the ongoing and lingering effects of the Covid pandemic we all had to develop and adapt to a new normal in both our personal and professional lives. With a nationwide surge in retirements and resignations from our profession, agencies across the country (and here locally) started feeling the pressures of short-staffing, challenges in recruiting, legislative reforms, and the financial impacts of the continued pandemic.

While we as a law enforcement agency have adapted to the many required changes, we have continued to make our commitment to service a top priority. This required us to be more creative in our response to calls for service, and to focus on keeping our officers and our community safe from possible exposure to this dangerous illness. We will continue to make needed improvements as we look forward to a more productive and brighter 2022.

Year 2021 continued to challenge us in the area of personnel as we faced retirements of two senior sergeants and officer turnover and hired three replacement officers. These turnovers and recruitment challenges continued to create shortages of available patrol personnel leading to increased workloads, reduced time off and challenges in scheduled training. However, despite these challenges, our available personnel stepped up to cover each shift and ensure our levels of service were not impacted and that we remained one of the safest communities on the Central Coast.



We have continued to see increased calls for service responding to over 15,000 calls, documenting over 2,500 reports and citations, and making over 660 arrests for a variety of violations. In addition, we responded to over 100 traffic related complaints and accidents. This continued to be challenging due to ongoing legislative changes resulting in continued zero bail policies, early inmate releases and county jails not accepting most prisoners due to Covid and social distancing requirements which has carried over from year 2020.

Once again, this report will highlight and summarize some of the operational and administrative components of the Morro Bay Police Department and give our readers some insight into the daily operations of a full-service police department. We also look forward to bringing back our Citizen’s Police Academy in 2022 to provide an even deeper dive into the internal workings of your police department. This is a great opportunity for those who want a better understanding of the “how and why” of what we do on a daily basis. This nine-week course offers a great way to get to know and interact with the members of the department and we encourage participation.

MBPD continues to focus on our community “quality of life” issues for both residents and visitors. We continue to improve upon our Neighborhood Cop program and mobile App to increase our community interaction and engagement efforts and have several new officers working to make a positive difference throughout our community.

Once again, I am honored to serve this community and to lead such an amazing group of dedicated professionals who make up the Morro Bay Police Department. Our community should be proud of the work they do, the commitment they make, and the services they provide.

Sincerely,

Jody Cox, Chief of Police

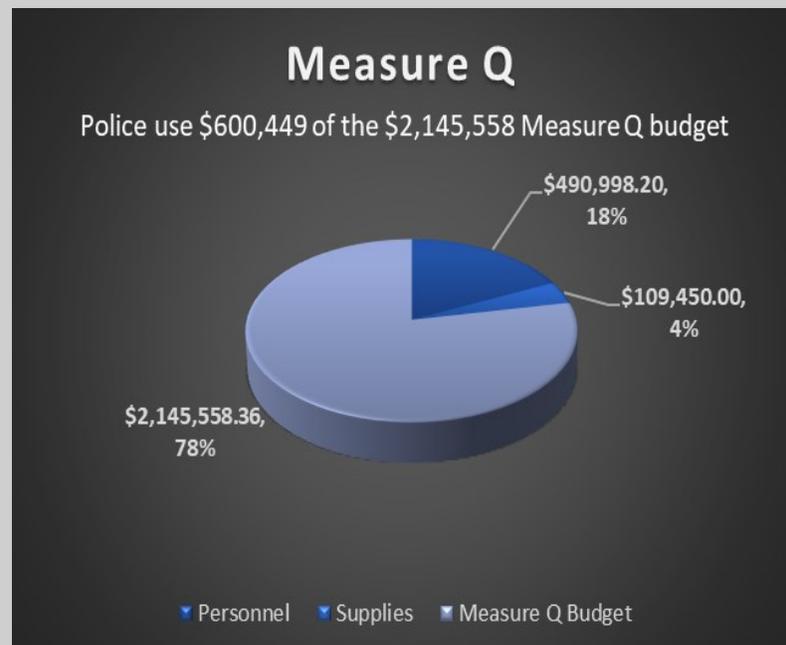
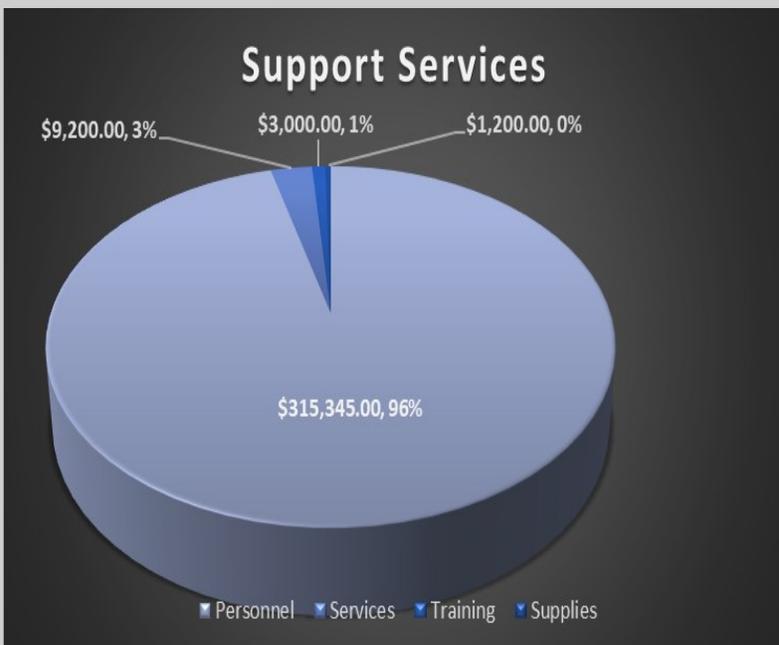
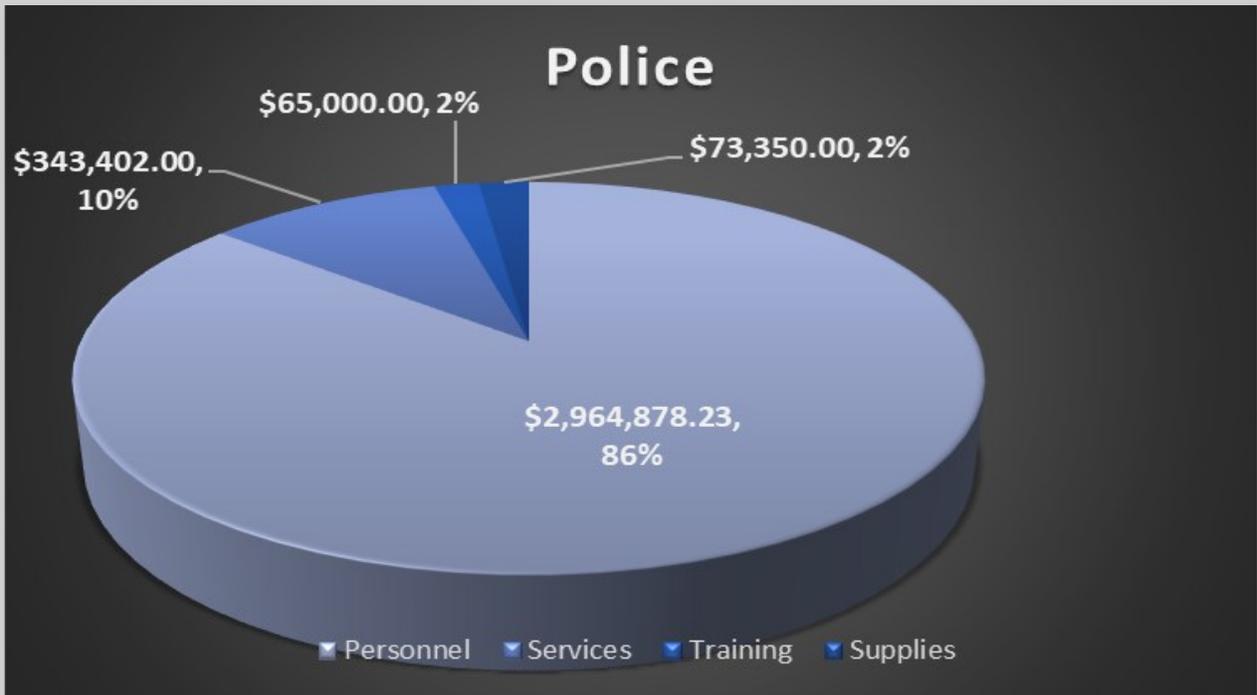
Morro Bay Police Department





BUDGET

The 2021 budget continued to see the impacts of the 2020 pandemic, however, we have started to see some hope in the anticipated recovery from the devastating global pandemic. The city has started to restore some of the lost staff positions, including those impacting the police department. All city departments remain cognizant of the financial impacts of the previous year and continue to find creative and cost-effective ways to provide core essential services to our community. Our community rose to the challenge in supporting Measure “E”, a tax initiative to support all city services including those direly needed by public safety. We continue to thank our community for it’s unwavering support through some very challenging times and look forward to a full recovery and end to the pandemic.

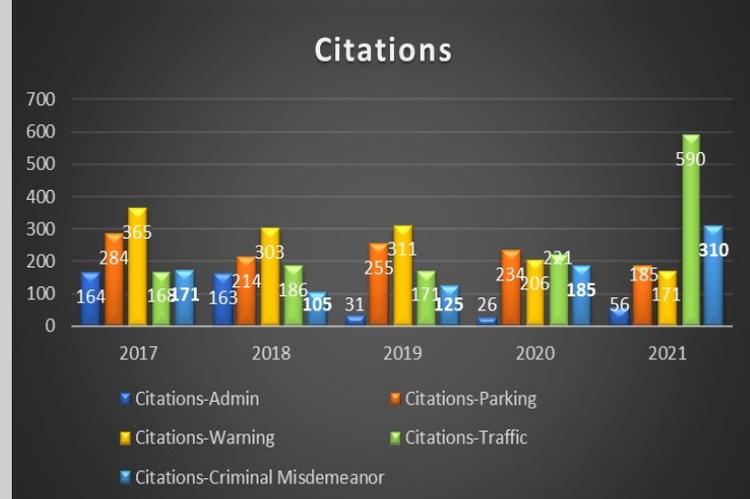
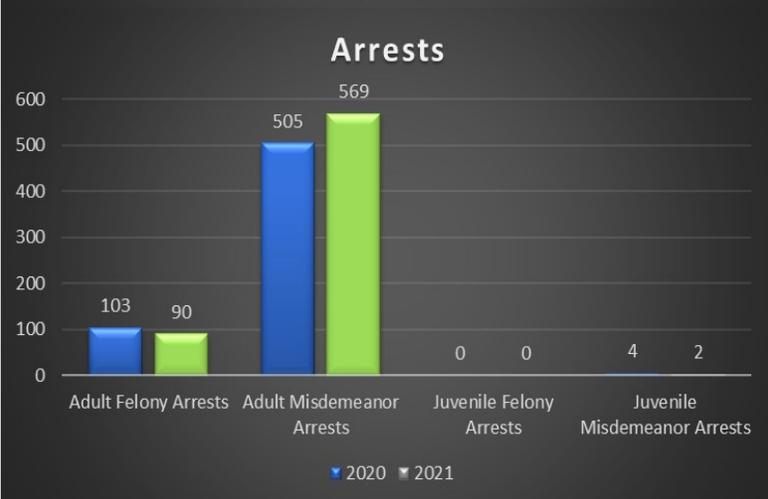
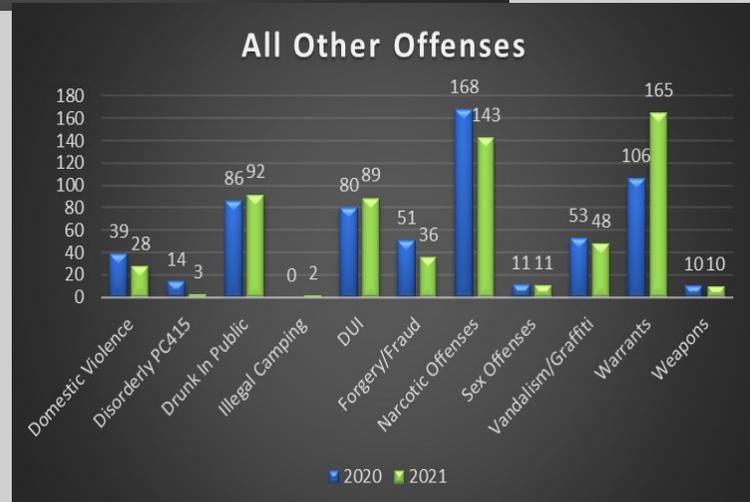
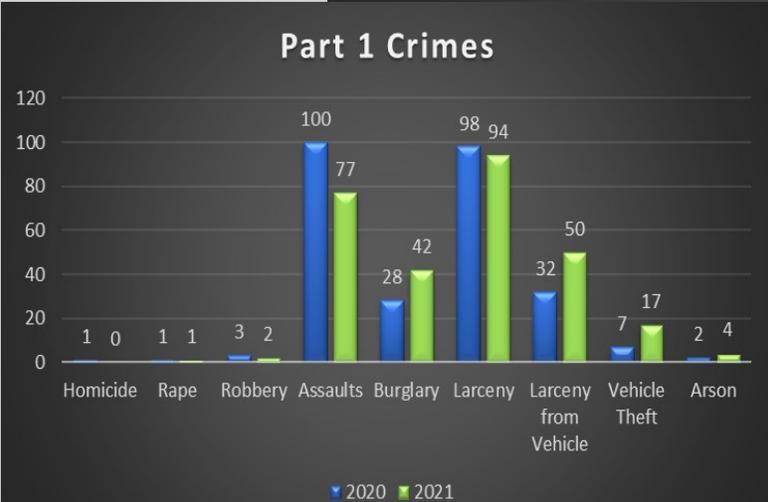




STATISTICS

2021 was another busy year for MBPD as we continued to provide 24/7 police services to our community, residents, businesses, and visitors while working through several staffing shortages. Our recruitment team continued to work hard to find highly qualified new officers to add to our team, bringing on three new officers in 2021. Although officers continued to work short staffed, we continued to see a consistent amount of calls for service from the previous year responding to 15,119 calls (compared to approx. 15,000 in 2020). This year continued to be challenging due to legislation resulting in zero bail policies, early inmate releases and county jails not accepting most prisoners due to COVID and social distancing requirements.

During 2021, Morro Bay Police Officers authored nearly 1,360 total reports, 617 of those reports were closed with an arrest, 76 cases were submitted to the District Attorney's Officer for review of charges.



OPERATIONS DIVISION



Commander Amy Watkins oversees the operations division, sworn personnel in the operations support division, community outreach, fleet services, and serves as the department Public Information Officer. Commander Watkins began her career with Visalia PD in January 2000, and joined the Morro Bay Police Department in August 2019. Commander Watkins has worked a variety of assignments including Patrol, Investigations, Special Enforcement Unit, and SWAT. She holds a Master's Degree in Public Administration and is a graduate of CA POST Command College.

The mission of the Operations Division is to ensure the safety and security of those who work, live and visit Morro Bay. We accomplish this by providing timely and professional public safety services to the community utilizing a problem solving approach in partnership with the community through prevention, suppression, and apprehension strategies. The Operations Division is comprised of Patrol, Traffic, Bike Patrol, Unmanned Aerial Systems Unit (UAS), School Resource Officer, Homeless Outreach Team, Volunteer Patrol, Neighborhood Cop Program, Operations Division is the largest division in the department and is made up of 16 sworn employees.





Patrol Unit

The Patrol Unit is the largest unit within the Morro Bay Police Department. The officers of this unit perform the most visible and recognized functions of the department. These officers are the ones who you see behind the wheel of the patrol cars who respond to emergency calls for service, look for lost children, comfort those who suffer a loss or are the unfortunate victims of a crime, arrest intoxicated drivers, enforce traffic laws, conduct traffic accident investigations, lend a helping hand when needed, and proactively patrol the streets keeping an eye out for criminal activity and keeping the community safe 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year.





Patrol Operations



Sergeant Tony Mosqueda a seven-year veteran of the Morro Bay Police Department with 16 total years in Law Enforcement is one of four patrol watch commanders who supervises patrol officers during daily operations. Sergeant Mosqueda serves as one of the department's Range Masters and is the instructor for less lethal deployments such as Taser, OC spray, bean bag shotgun.



SENIOR OFFICER ART VASQUEZ

Senior Officer Vasquez joined MBPD in June of 2019. Ofc. Vasquez worked with the San Bernardino County Public Defenders Office as an Investigator for 12 years. Senior Ofc. Vasquez has put himself through the basic police academy all while holding a full-time job and balancing home life.



OFFICER CHRISTIAN GALAZ

Officer Galaz joined MBPD in April of 2019. Ofc. Galaz worked with Fresno County Sheriff Officers for almost 2 years as a reserve deputy. Ofc. Galaz serves as one of the department's Field Training Officers (FTO) and Drug Recognition Experts.



Patrol Operations



Sergeant Nicole Taylor, a ten-year veteran of the Morro Bay Police Department with 13 years total years in Law Enforcement is one of four patrol watch commanders who supervises patrol officers during daily operations. Sergeant Taylor is responsible for organizing police operations during special events such as Avocado Margarita Festival, Harbor Fest, and AMGEN. Sergeant Taylor also coordinates department outreach events such as Coffee with a Cop, National Night Out, and the Law Enforcement Torch Run for Special Olympics.



OFFICER AARON MILLER

Officer Aaron Miller joined MBPD in November of 2019. Ofc. Miller is a graduate of the Fresno Police Academy and has a Bachelors Degree from San Jose State. Ofc. Miller serves as one of the department's Range Masters.



OFFICER KEVIN MCCOOL

Officer Kevin McCool grew up in Morro Bay and joined MBPD in June of 2021. Ofc. McCool was a ten-year veteran with Ventura CHP before coming back home. Ofc. McCool serves as the department's traffic investigator.



Patrol Operations



Sergeant Gene Stuart, a 15 year veteran of the Morro Bay Police Department is one of four patrol watch commanders supervising patrol officers and answering community calls for service. Sergeant Stuart is the department Field Training Program Coordinator. As the FTO Coordinator he is responsible for trainee/FTO assignments, remediation, review of the Daily Observation Reports (DORs) and other weekly and end-of-phase reports. Sergeant Stuart is responsible for managing the department's sexual assault registrant program (290PC). Sergeant Stuart is also the coordinator for the department's sUAS (drone) program.



OFFICER BILLY BOWER

Officer Billy Bower joined MBPD in November of 2019. Ofc. Bower comes to us from Western Grove, AR. Ofc. Bower is a graduate of College of the Redwoods academy. Ofc. Bower serves as the department's sole motor officer.



OFFICER LUIS MARTINEZ

Officer Luis Martinez joined MBPD in January of 2021. Ofc. Martinez graduated the Alan Hancock Academy in the top four of his class. Ofc. Martinez assists on a wide range of specialty assignments.



Patrol Operations



Sergeant Will Marvos, a six-year veteran of the Morro Bay Police Department with 15 total years in Law Enforcement is one of four patrol watch commanders supervising patrol officers during daily operations. Sergeant Marvos currently is an active member of the San Luis Obispo County SWAT Team. Sergeant Marvos serves as one of the department's Range Masters and Defensive Tactics instructors and Advanced Traffic investigator. Sergeant Marvos oversees the MBPD Explorer program for youths interested in a career in Law Enforcement.



OFFICER JASON TA

Officer Jason Ta joined MBPD in April of 2020. Ofc. Ta is a graduate of the Fresno Police Academy and has a Bachelors Degree from San Jose State. Ofc. Ta currently is an active member of the San Luis Obispo County SWAT Team.



OFFICER DANIEL PALUMBO

Officer Daniel Palumbo joined MBPD in April of 2021. Ofc. Palumbo comes to us from Hanford PD with two years experience. Ofc. Palumbo serves as the department's Honor Guard, Explorer Advisor, homeless liaison and works closely with the SLO County THMA organization.



Traffic Unit

The Morro Bay Police Department Traffic Unit is an ancillary duty assigned to patrol officers who have successfully completed the CA POST required Motorcycle Operations and Training course. Every MBPD officer is required to attend basic and intermediate traffic collision investigation courses. Officers are also sent to traffic enforcement related training such as Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (ARIDE), Breathalyzer Alcohol Test training, Radar/LIDAR training, and Standard Field Sobriety Test training. MBPD officers are trained similar to officers in larger agencies who work traffic as a primary duty. The department currently operates two Zero Electric Police Motorcycles and utilizes two refurbished BMW police motorcycles for training and special events. In addition to traffic enforcement, the MBPD Traffic Unit is frequently utilized for special events and traffic control. The Motor program is slotted for two MBPD officers.



Bike Patrol Team

The Morro Bay Police Department's Bike Patrol Team is staffed by police officers as a special assignment during community and special events. The Bike Patrol Team focuses on problem solving and proactive patrols of downtown, the Embarcadero, public parking areas, and during community events in an effort to establish an approachable police presence. Patrolling on a bicycle gives officers a unique opportunity to interact with the community and address specific livability issues. The Bike Patrol Team deploys at planned and unplanned community events for crowd monitoring, enforcement and citizen interaction. There are currently three certified officers on the Bike Patrol Team.





Police Volunteers



The Morro Bay Police Volunteer Unit consists of citizens who contribute their time and talents to the Morro Bay Police Department and our community. Volunteers support and supplement police department services, in non-hazardous duties, to free up police officers and staff to perform other duties and tasks critical for public safety. In 2021, there were 13 active volunteers assisting the department.

Some of the tasks performed by our Police Volunteers in 2021 include:

- Traffic Control * Volunteer Patrol * UAS Flights * Missing Person Response * Special Events * Fleet Maintenance * Fingerprinting * Clerical Duties * Records Support

In 2021, our volunteers worked more than 2,119 hours. These hours were worked prior to and after the pandemic closed many facilities within our community. With large numbers of visitors coming to Morro Bay and increased calls for service, our volunteers dressed in Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and continued to answer the call in support of the community



- Taffy

Not pictured:

Larry Padalino

Lisa McClish

Jeff Rowland

Bill Peirce



School Resource Officer



The Morro Bay Police Department's School Resource Officer (SRO) Program was developed in partnership with the San Luis Coastal Unified School District to ensure safety and promote positive relationships on school campuses and at school and community events. Morro Bay's School Resource Officer Alex Gillespie is assigned to Morro Bay High School and Del Mar Elementary School. Officer Gillespie takes an interactive approach with students at the schools. Officer Gillespie not only investigates crimes on campus, he also participates in a variety of activities including:

- Cops & Kids Field Day, Bike to school events, Act as a liaison between school administration and the Police Department.
- Perform classroom presentations concerning law enforcement as a career, social media safety, traffic safety, traffic control, drug and alcohol prevention.
- Patrol campuses and surrounding neighborhoods.
- Collaborate with the Investigations Division and Juvenile County Probation Department.

The SRO strives to create a safe learning environment by being available for the needs of the students, staff, and community.



Unmanned Aerial Systems (sUAS)



The mission of the Morro Bay Police Department's Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS) Unit is to provide airborne support to police operations in a safe, responsible, and transparent manner to preserve the peace, increase officer safety, reduce response times for aerial support, and improve the quality of life in Morro Bay. sUAS are small, remotely operated, unmanned aerial systems; also commonly referred to as drones. They are efficient and effective in providing law enforcement critical information to respond to calls for service, emergencies, or to conduct criminal investigations. Some examples include: providing an overhead view of an area or incident for ground personnel, safely clearing the interior of buildings, providing detailed documentation of crime scenes, accident scenes, and searching for lost or missing persons. In 2021, Morro Bay Police Department UAS Unit was used for numerous law enforcement and community related activities. Here in Morro Bay the UAS Unit assisted with calls for service related to locating missing and suicidal subjects, traffic collisions, structure fires, locating wanted subjects, and monitoring of traffic during busy weekends.

In 2021, the MBPD UAS Unit flew 184 missions, totaling 37 hours of flight time, and 202 miles in distance flown. Equipment used by the sUAS Unit are the DJI Phantom 4, DJI Inspire and the DJI Mavic 2 Enterprise.



Investigations Unit

The Morro Bay Police Department Investigations Unit is supervised by the department Administrative Sergeant and consists of one detective who receives specialized training. In addition to the assigned detective, qualified officers are placed on an on-call rotation to provide 24 hour investigations coverage. The detective provides support and guidance to officers conducting criminal investigations in the field. Detectives are responsible for investigating crimes which occur within the city of Morro Bay and submit cases to the District Attorney's Office for review. Throughout 2021, investigators and officers spent countless hours conducting follow-up, authoring search warrants, and providing court testimony. During 2021, MBPD investigations unit received 23 cases for investigation, out of those cases four arrests were made, and ten cases were sent to the District Attorney's Office for review of charges.

Highlighted Cases for 2021



Emery Grohregin, age 26 pulled out a handgun from his rear waistband and pointed it at the victims head. Grohregin then fled into a residential area and was seen entering a vehicle. Officers conducted a canvass search of the area and located two firearms that were discarded by Grohregin. Days later, Grohregin returned to the location and was apprehended and taken into custody after a brief standoff in a local motel.

A teen was arrested on June 18 for several burglaries and credit/debit card fraud in the Morro Bay area.

California State Park Rangers reported an increase in car burglaries in the Montana de Oro State Park beginning in the middle of May.

State Parks began an investigation into the burglaries. Morro Bay Police located the teen suspect who was found to be in possession of several stolen items.



IMMEDIATE RELEASE State Parks Beach, Morro Bay

MORRO BAY, Calif., December 24, 2021 –

At 10:48 am a male surfer off State Parks Beach just north of Atascadero Road was pronounced dead at scene. Harbor, Police and Fire Departments responded to a report of a male victim unresponsive on the beach after he was pulled from the water suffering from an apparent shark attack. At this time the victim has not been identified. The Obispo County Coroner's Office with State Parks representatives are currently investigating the incident.

The beaches in the Morro Bay and State Parks area will remain closed and have ordered beachgoers to stay out of the water for the next 24 hours.



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Professional Standards & Training

The Morro Bay Police Department not only provides but encourages professional growth and continued development of our employees. This empowers each employee with the knowledge and skills necessary to provide a professional service level that meets Morro Bay's expectations.

The objectives of the Training Program are to:

- Enhance the level of law enforcement service to the public.
- Increase the technical expertise and overall effectiveness of our personnel.
- Provide for the continued professional development of department personnel.

Training of personnel includes in-house training, specialized outside training courses, and Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training (POST) certified training. The Department's annual training exceeds POST accreditation standards and is compliant with police agency best practices and state and federal law.

In 2021, Officers attended 2,034 hours of training, and Professional Staff attended 152 hours.



Some of the trainings attended in 2021:

- Threat Assessment & De-escalation
- Crisis Intervention
- Internal Affairs Investigations
- Supervisory Leadership Institute
- California Public Records Act
- ICI Homicide and Sexual Assault Investigation
- Traffic Collision Investigation
- Drug Abuse Recognition
- Field Training Officer





SUPPORT SERVICES

The Support Services Division is comprised of Investigations, Training Unit, Property & Evidence, Records, Lobby Services, and Professional Standards. The mission of the Support Services Division is to provide the highest level of service to the community and members of the police department. The Support Services Manager oversees a full-time professional staff member and two part-time professional staff members. The division is also supported by members of the department volunteer unit.



Support Services Manager **Bonnie Johnson** oversees the department Records and Property & Evidence Units. As the Operations Support Manager, Bonnie also serves as the Administrative Assistant to the Police Chief and Commander, and manages the department's records management system (RMS), records retention, body worn camera and in-car video system, personnel records, statistical information, and processing of digital evidence for the District Attorney's office. Bonnie works closely with Chief Cox to prepare and manage the department's annual budget.



Records

Under the direction of the Support Services Manager, Records is responsible for all aspects of document control within the department. The one full-time and one part-time Records Technicians process, maintain, distribute all police files and Public Records Requests. In 2021, the records unit processed 1,274 reports , 452 supplemental reports and 94 accident reports.



Records Erin Lester started with the department in August of 2021. Erin is the department's full-time records technician. Erin also serves as the department training coordinator.



Christie Montoya started with the department in August of 2019. Christie is the department's part-time records technician. Christie is also a member of the Peer Support Team.



Property & Evidence

The Property & Evidence Unit consists of one three-quarter-time Evidence Technician. The Property and Evidence Unit is responsible for the receipt, storage, safekeeping, release and disposal of all property and evidence that comes under control of the department. The Property & Evidence division processed 1,255 pieces of property that includes Evidence, Found and Safekeeping items.



Tami Ponder is the department's Property & Evidence Technician. Tami started with the department in 2012 as the part-time Property & Evidence Technician. Tami is also a member of the Peer Support Team.





Chief's Advisory Committee

Chief Jody Cox created the Chief's Advisory Committee (CAC) as a resource to formulate strategies, develop policing concepts, and to increase public awareness regarding police policy issues. The Committee's purpose is to address concerns associated with police-community relations, the improvement of the Morro Bay Police Department operations, and public safety issues in order to further enhance the quality of life in our community. The committee is intended to provide a forum for discussions concerning community issues and the goal is to have a broad spectrum of viewpoints represented through the committee members and the police department.

The Inaugural Committee consists of five members, comprised of a diverse cross-section of active community members throughout the City of Morro Bay. These members will represent a range of interests, expertise and experience, which include business owners, educational leaders, non-profit organizations, public relations, faith community, youth representation and more.

Members are chosen to serve on the committee for their professionalism, integrity and commitment to their community. The term for committee members is limited to two years to allow for greater participation by additional interested parties.

2021 Chief's Advisory Committee Members

- Meredith Bates mlbates@kcbx.net
- Paula Hulet pvhulet@gmail.com
- Rick Cobbs cobbsrockx2@gmail.com
- Steven Diaz sdiaz@ppbi.com
- Patricia Gordon prgordon49@sbcglobal.net
- Valentina Petrovia
val@valentinapetroviaconsulting.com





NEIGHBORHOOD COP PROGRAM

Neighborhood Cop

The "Neighborhood Cop" program focuses on a personalized policing method where individual officers are assigned to a specific geographical area to work in a partnership with community members to identify and solve problems. The program assigns officers to a specific sector of the city. The officers assigned will be responsible for their sector. This does not mean that the officer handles all calls for service in this sector, but instead is a contact person for long term or quality of life issues in the assigned sector.

The "Neighborhood Cop" program assists in managing the quality of life for our residents and businesses within the City of Morro Bay. Our goal is to work collaboratively with our community to address concerns before they escalate into major problems. "Neighborhood Cop" allows officers to take ownership of their assigned sector and reach out to the residents and businesses to help them solve some of the issues they may have within their neighborhood.

Register for the Neighborhood Cop Program

Begin a two-way communication between you and the officer assigned to your sector by registering for the "Neighborhood Cop" program. Registering will allow you to contact your neighborhood officer and periodically receive notices, push notifications and/or emails from your officer keeping you up to date with any news happening within your sector.

Download the free Morro Bay Police Department app from your device's app store. The Morro Bay Police Department app allows quick access to the police information that concerns you most including press releases, contacts directory, and links to community policing, weekly police logs, neighborhood watch, and other important information.



Morro Bay Police Department Launches Mobile App to Connect with the Community 24/7

The Morro Bay Police Department is thrilled to announce the launch of our custom mobile app for [iPhone](#) and [Android](#) devices. Morro Bay residents now have a direct connection with the department for the latest community news, instant public safety notifications, and more.

The app was developed to aid the department with the introduction, management, and outreach connected with the new Neighborhood Cop Community Program. The app will provide a central location for community members and residents to identify their "Neighborhood Cop" officers and register for the program.

Morro Bay Police Department
Neighborhood Cop Community Program

The Neighborhood Cop program was created to enhance open communication, build trust, and increase transparency. The officers will support our community in managing the quality of life for the residents and businesses within the City of Morro Bay. The Neighborhood Cop program will strive to address concerns before they escalate into major problems.

The "Neighborhood Cop Program" allows officers to take ownership of assigned sectors and reach out to the residents and businesses to help them solve some of the issues that they have within their residing area. An example of some of these issues that an officer assigned to a specific area may handle include:

- On-going disturbances
- Parking issues
- Animal issues
- Vandalism
- Crime trends
- Drug related issues
- Transient issues

Search "Morro Bay Police Department" in the App store to download.



MORRO BAY POLICE DEPARTMENT





IN THE COMMUNITY





WHY I WEAR THE BADGE

“I wear the badge to speak for those who cannot speak for themselves. I genuinely enjoy making an impact every day I put the uniform on, whether small or big. With the badge comes a great deal of responsibility, it is an honor of mine to be able to represent our Community and be a part of the positive shift in Community Policing in Law Enforcement.”

- Officer Jason Ta



“I wear the badge because I felt the calling to service while serving in the military and wanted to continue my service. I love the city of Morro Bay and want to preserve the small town feel while showing the citizens that we are part of the community too!”

- Officer Daniel Palumbo

“I wear the badge because I have always wanted to be a part of something bigger than myself. To be able to look back and know that my presence has in some way, shape, or form changed the world around me.”

- Officer Luis Martinez





RECOGNITION

OFFICER OF THE YEAR



Officer Jason Ta began his career with the Morro Bay Police Department in April of 2020 and immediately made an impact in our community and in our profession. In 2021, Officer Ta led the department in total arrests, citations, and reports, and while we do not utilize statistics as the only measuring stick of officer performance or success, his undeniable work ethic is noted throughout the department.

In addition to his patrol duties, Officer Ta serves the department as a Field Training Officer, an Explorer Advisor, and a member of the San Luis Obispo Regional SWAT Team. We are extremely happy to recognize Jason Ta as the 2021 Officer of the Year.

EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR



Erin Lester began her career with the Morro Bay Police Department in 2021 as the department's police records technician and will soon be taking on her additional role in our training division assisting as the training coordinator. While new to the field of law enforcement, Erin was a quick study learning the tedious and technical skills required of a lead police records technician.

Erin was praised for her attention to detail and her ability to multitask while performing her detailed tasks and helping all staff and community members who visit our department. Erin's skills and abilities keep the records department running smooth while juggling the demands of the department and the community.

VOLUNTEER OF THE YEAR



Dave Pabinquit has dedicated over 500 hours of service during 2021. Dave is an integral member of the department UAS (drone) Team has responded to numerous calls for service when needed by both our agency and allied agencies. Dave spends a lot of time updating and maintaining the drone equipment to ensure we are operationally ready to respond at any time. In 2021, Dave joined our department range team as a Range Safety officer and shares his experience and expertise with our staff. Going back to 2020, Dave has dedicated close to a thousand hours as a member of our UAS Team answering calls for a drone operator and deploying to nearly every other city in San Luis Obispo County to assist in protests, shooting investigations, and criminal investigations.



AWARDS

Senior Officer Art Vasquez was honored by San Luis Obispo King David's Masonic Lodge for his excellence in service to the community. King David's honors SLO County Law Enforcement at their Annual Peace Officer Appreciation Dinner. Senior Officer Vasquez was nominated for this award as MBPD's Officer of the Year for 2020.





RETIREMENTS



Sergeant Mark Martin

Mark retired in 2021 after a 24 year career in law enforcement. Mark started his career with the Fresno Police Department in 1997 and later joined the Morro Bay Police Department in 2018. Mark served in various roles which included Detectives, FTO Coordinator, Senior Officer, Field Evidence Technician and Drone operator. Mark was passionate about his DUI and drug investigations over years leading the department in arrests and convictions.

Retirement may be an ending, a closing, but it is also a new beginning. Good luck in retirement Sgt. Mark Martin



Dale retired in 2021 after a 27 year career in law enforcement. Dale started his career with the Fresno Police Department in 1997 before later moving to the Tulare County Sheriffs Department where he served for 12 years. In 2009, Dale joined the Morro Bay Police Department and brought with him vast experience making him a great mentor for several young officers beginning their career in law enforcement. While at MBPD, Dale served as a Detective, Senior Officer, and Sergeant for many years.

Dale, your incredible work has left an amazing legacy for those following in your footsteps. Congratulations on an inspiring career and your retirement.



Sergeant Dale Cullum





IN MEMORIAM





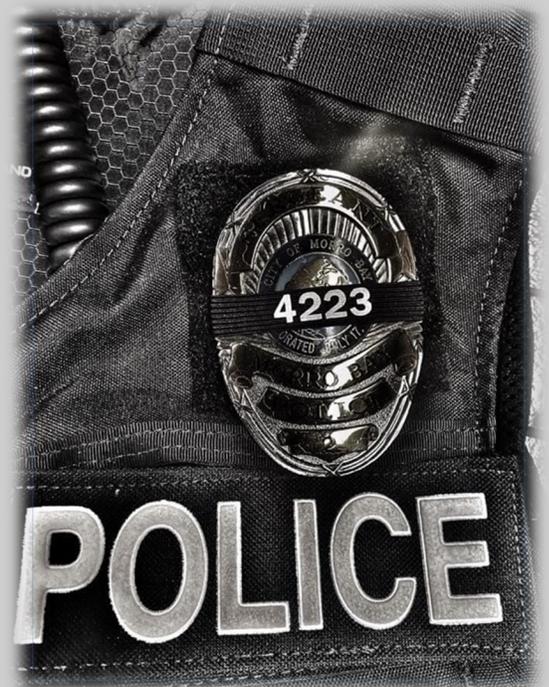
LUCA BENEDETTI



Detective Luca Benedetti was shot and killed while executing a search warrant at an apartment in the city of San Luis Obispo. Detectives and Officers were at the location looking for stolen property from a series of commercial burglaries.

After approaching the apartment and identifying themselves they asked to enter. They then waited for an extended period before forcing entry into the apartment where the suspect was laying in wait for them. As soon as they made entry the suspect opened fire hitting Detective Benedetti and another detective.

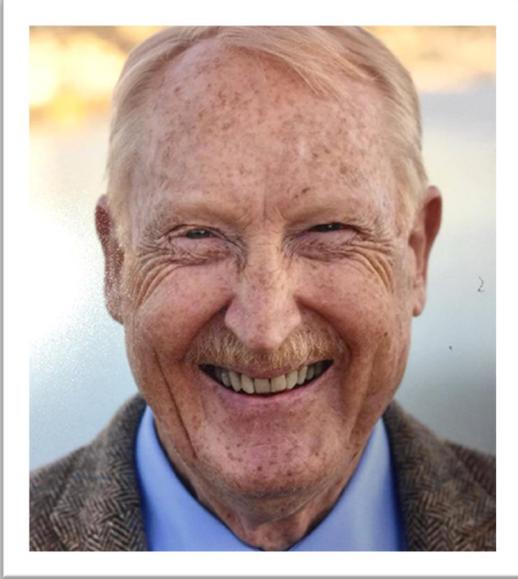
Detective Benedetti served with the San Luis Obispo Police Department for 12 years and is survived by his wife and two children.





IN MEMORIAM

COUNCILMEMBER RED DAVIS



Red Davis began his service as Councilmember in 2017 and won a second four-year term in November 2020.

Prior to being elected to Council, Red Davis served on various City ad hoc committees, including the General Plan Advisory Committee. He volunteered for numerous community organizations, including the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce, Friends of the Morro Bay Library, and Bike SLO County. Red retired from Caltrans in 1996 as a project manager after 33 years of service and proudly served his country in the U.S. Air Force from 1965 to 1998, retiring as Senior Master Sergeant.

Red was an avid cyclist who also served as president of the SLO Bike Club, chair of the Morro Bay Citizens Bike Committee, chair of the County Bicycle Advisory Committee and founding member and vice president of Bike SLO County. In 2015, the SLO County Board of Supervisors named the Los Osos Valley Road bike lanes between Foothill Boulevard and South Bay Boulevard the “Red Davis Bikeway.”

DALE REDDEL



Dale was passionate about community service and served as a Planning Commissioner, Mayor of Morro Bay, and longtime member of the Morro Bay Police Department Volunteers, Rotary and Elks Club. Dale loved Morro Bay and felt honored to raise his children, grandchildren, and great-grandchildren in this town.



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