

# RALSTON POLICE DEPARTMENT YEAR END REPORT 2020



# Chief of Police Comments

Dear Mayor, City Council Members and Citizens of the Community,

The year 2020 will certainly go down in history as one of the most challenging times that we as citizens have faced worldwide. The Covid-19 pandemic, that became full blown in March 2020, made life as we know it come to a stand still. Citizens, businesses, organizations and governments all scrambled to find face masks, gloves and hand sanitizers to use in an attempt to thwart the virus from spreading. When statistics did not appear to show the spread was flattening or slowing, businesses were forced to close, and people were told to quarantine and not to leave their homes unless absolutely necessary. Essential workers, as they became known as, including all health care professionals and law enforcement officers, had to continue to work from the field and not from home.

The Ralston Police Department, consisting of both the Administrative section and police officers, was not spared as almost 50% of our staff was infected and had to quarantine. Thankfully, nobody suffered any serious problems and were able to return to work. With any small agency, this did create slight staffing and scheduling issues throughout the year. Police officers had to learn how to deal with almost everything in a different fashion. Answering calls, making traffic stops, interacting with the public all took drastic tolls. Officers were given orders to limit contact with people, to only make stops if absolutely necessary, to stand by outside of fire department calls and not enter unless it was to save a life, and to wear masks (before mandates) whenever in contact with a citizen outside of the main office.

Many events that the police department participate in were cancelled due to the virus. School functions and sporting events where our officers interact with parents, staff and students were mostly cancelled. Bike Rodeo, Tunes in Town Square, Wine Walks, and Holiday Magic were other big events that were cancelled. Also, the major event that our department spends a considerable amount of time and effort on, the Independence Day celebration on both July 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>, was cancelled for the first time in memory.

Due to Covid, training for police officers was difficult to schedule. Many classes were signed up for early in the year only to be cancelled, rescheduled and cancelled again. In-person training took a back seat to video conferencing, zoom meetings, and on-line courses that have actually continued right into 2021. We were still able to top our annual training hours from 2019, but it was not the same quality as in-person hands on training.

2020 also showed the need for police agencies to take a look at their policies and procedures and what types of training courses are offered to its officers. There was intense social discord between many communities and the police due to several high-profile deaths involving police officers and citizens. There was, and it continues today, a push for police reform including several training topics that are being brought forth as mandated for police agencies. Some of these, De-escalation training, behavioral health response, responding to individuals in crisis, are all topics that were discussed last year as a priority for this department before any talk of reform began. We also included in our curriculum, Implicit Bias training block, an Excited Delirium class, and a Cultural Diversity class. We have always considered ourselves as proactive regarding training and feel that we have one of the best training programs in the area.

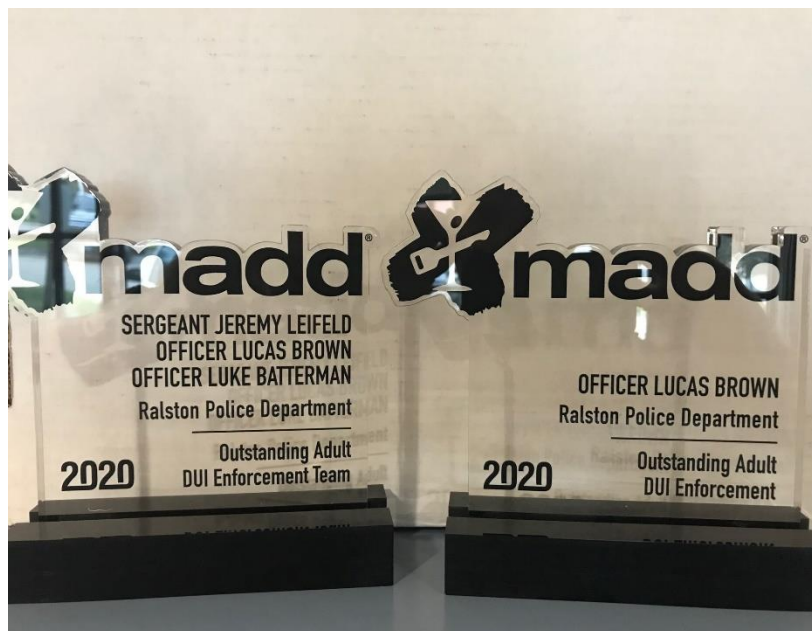
Things are already looking promising for 2021. Businesses are reopening, Covid numbers are declining, and millions of vaccine doses are being administered throughout the country. Hopefully, we can all get back to normal and see each other face to face before summer. Until then, our department will continue to serve and protect this community with honor, pride and professionalism. Should you have any questions about this report, feel free to contact me.

Respectfully,

Marc A. Leonardo  
Chief of Police



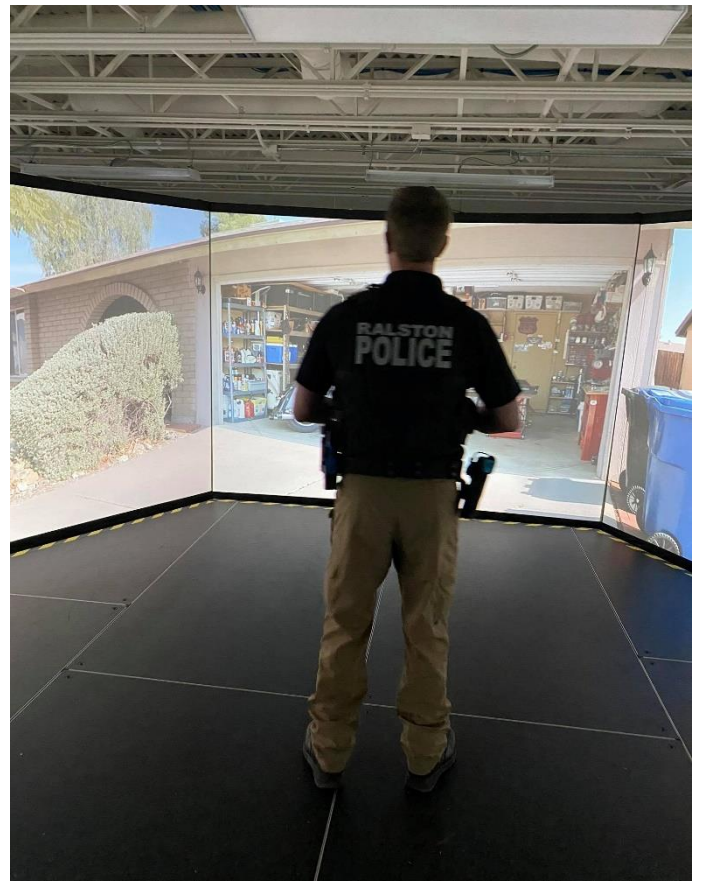
Sgt. Leifeld, Ofc. Brown, and Ofc. Batterman receive the MADD Outstanding Adult DUI Enforcement Team Award



Ofc. Brown received the MADD Outstanding Adult DUI Enforcement Award



Sgt. Leifeld and Ofc. Jepsen  
win a Life Saving Award



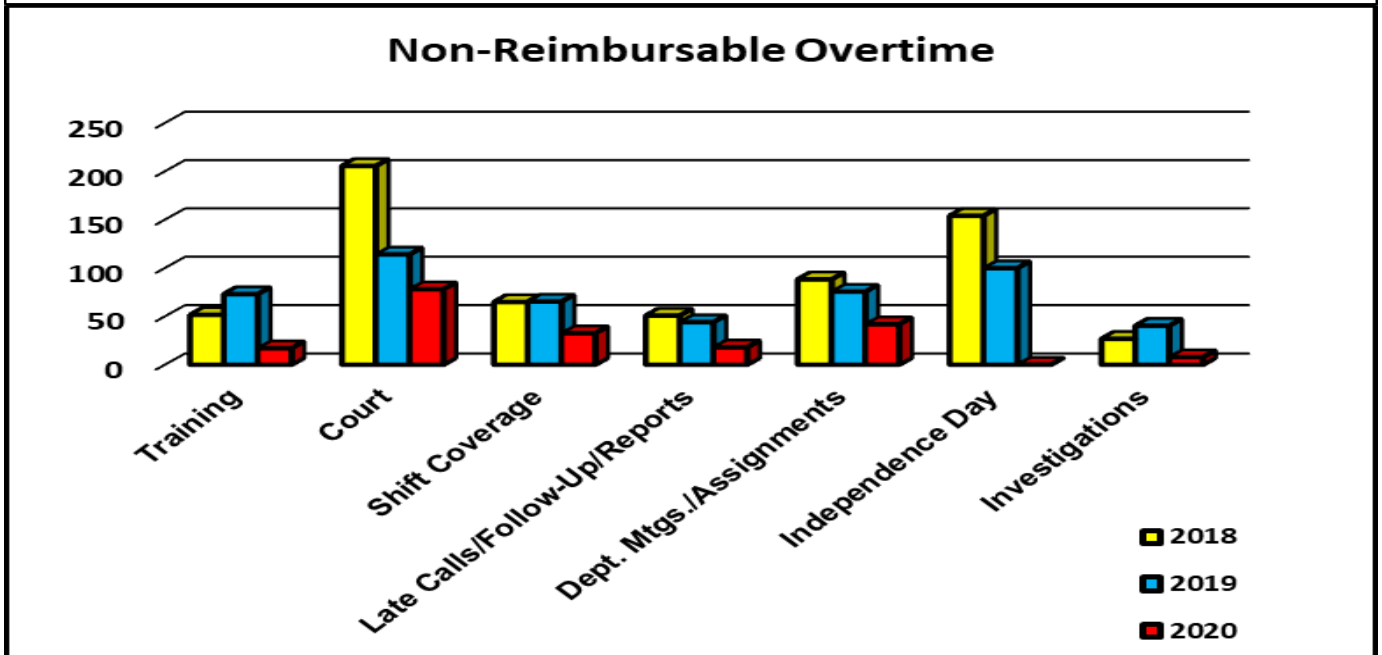
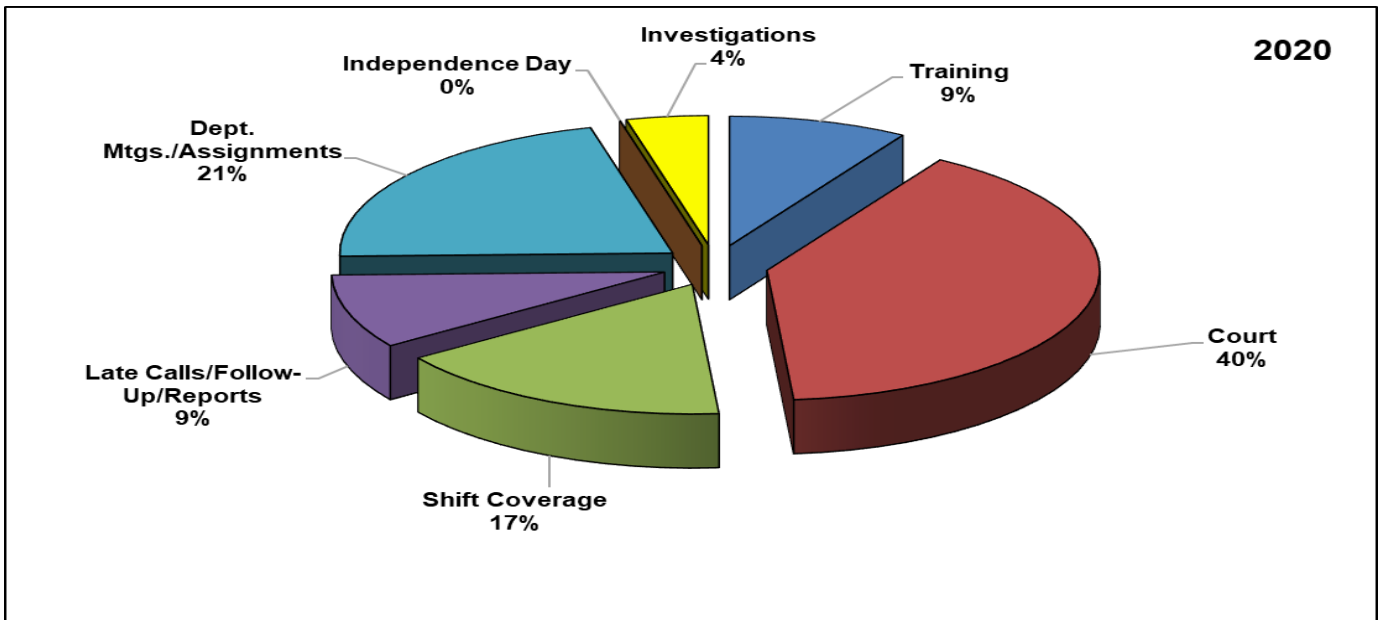
VirTra300 Training



Members of the department attended  
the funeral of Lincoln Police Department  
Investigator Mario Herrera.

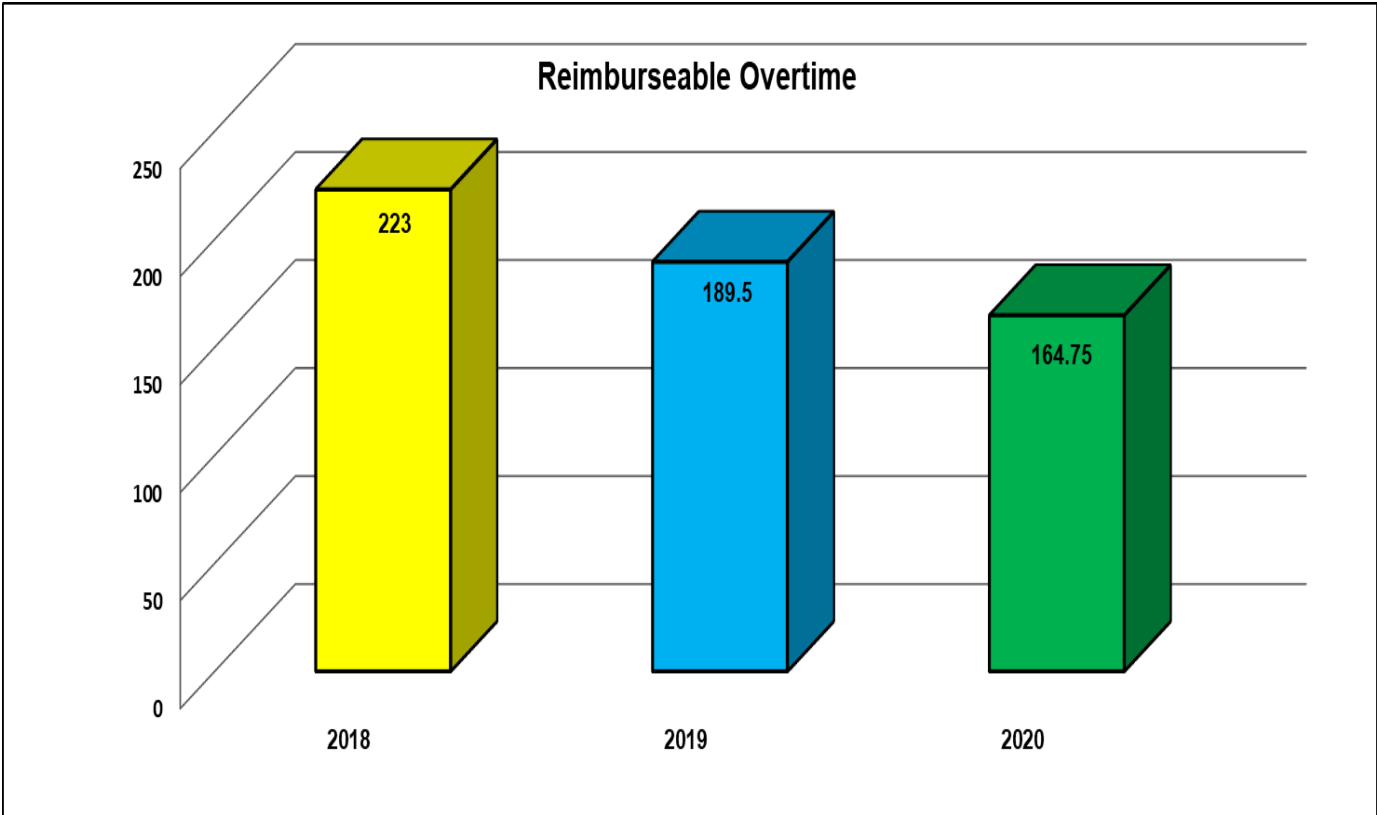
# Non-Reimbursable Overtime

2020 saw a drastic decrease in overtime expenditures by the department. Overtime decreased from 511.75 hours in 2019 to 195 hours in 2020, a decrease of 61.9%. COVID-19 had a huge impact on overtime costs in 2020. The pandemic drastically cut down on overtime expenditures for several reasons. The County courthouse was closed for several months, and hearings and trials were limited when it was open, leading to less officer court overtime. In normal years, Independence Day accounts for approximately 20% of the department's overtime budget. Due to COVID-19, the Independence Day activities were canceled in 2020, thus cutting a large overtime expense for the department. The pandemic also caused undue financial strains on the City's budget. The total Police overtime budget was drastically reduced. Administration and supervisors did an excellent job of ensuring anything other than absolutely necessary activities were done during normal working hours, or by flexing out extra time when necessary.



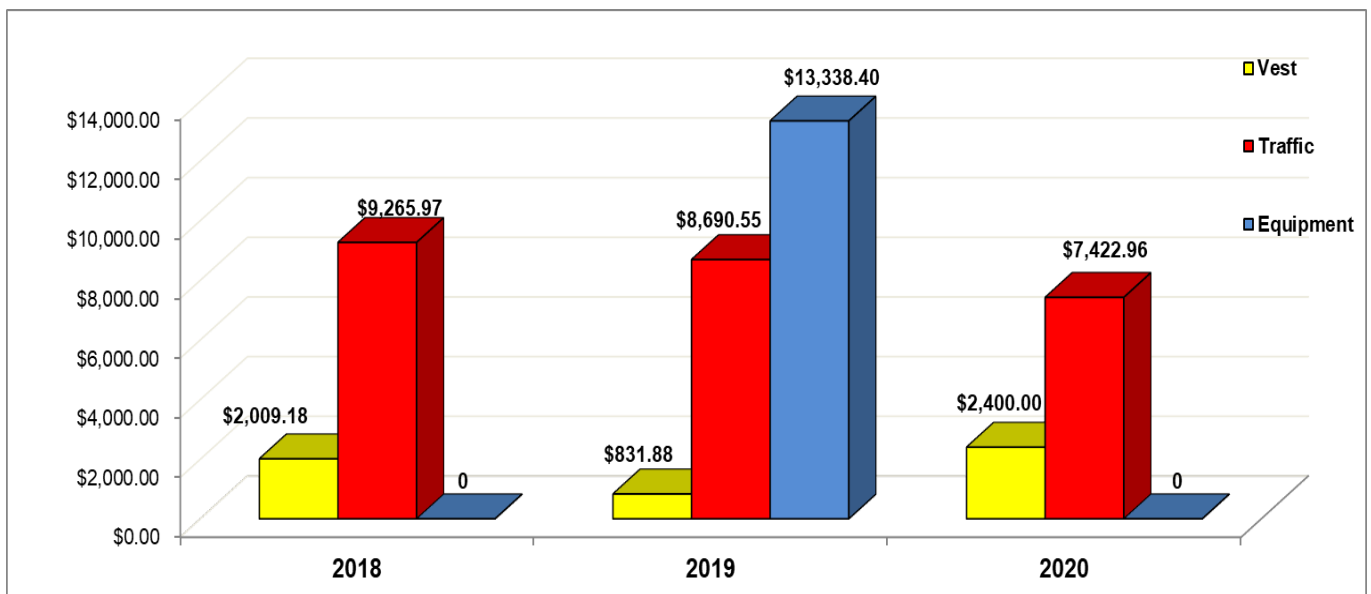
# Reimbursable Overtime

Every year the Nebraska Office of Highway Safety has several grants available to pay for agencies to participate in traffic enforcement initiatives. Even with a pandemic, the department participated in all four enforcement initiatives again in 2020, although the total hours worked was down slightly from last year. The unknown consequences of making physical contact with people on traffic stops more than likely played a significant role in the reduced hours officers signed up for. The grant funds paid 100% of overtime wages for officers who participated in these initiatives. These included two Click It or Ticket operations, and two Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over operations. During these overtime hours, additional officers worked saturated patrols, focusing on traffic related offenses to ensure seat belt compliance as well as taking drivers impaired by alcohol and/or drugs off the streets. Many of these grants take place around holidays when there are more people traveling.



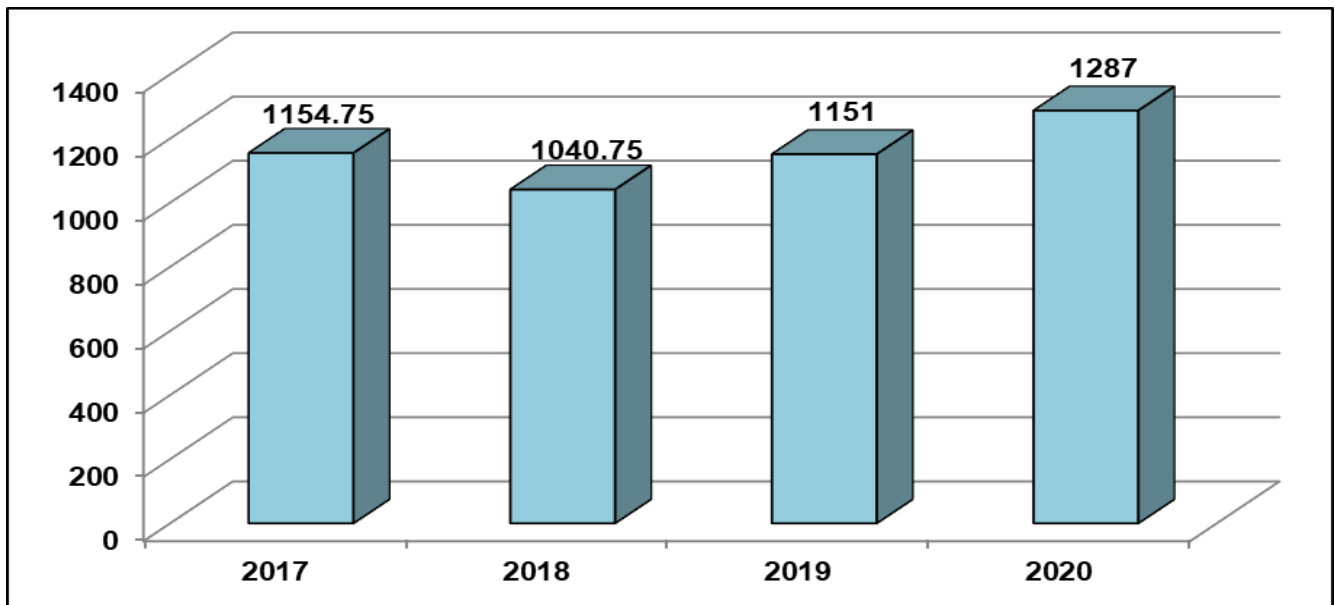
# Grants

Grants played an important role for the department in 2020. Five officers needed new ballistic vests in 2020. Vest manufacturers recommend vests are replaced every five years. The U.S. Department of Justice provided a grant for \$2,400.00 to assist the department in purchasing vests for these officers. The DOJ sponsors a Bulletproof Vest Partnership with local law enforcement agencies, providing 50% match funding for new ballistic vests. Vest reimbursements were higher in 2020 due to the fact that more officers required new vests than in 2019. As mentioned on the previous page, the Nebraska Office of Highway Safety approved grants for extra patrol for the traffic enforcement campaigns to include two Click It or Tickets initiatives and two Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over initiatives. In all the state paid \$7,422.96 for officers to work extra hours during these campaigns.



# Training

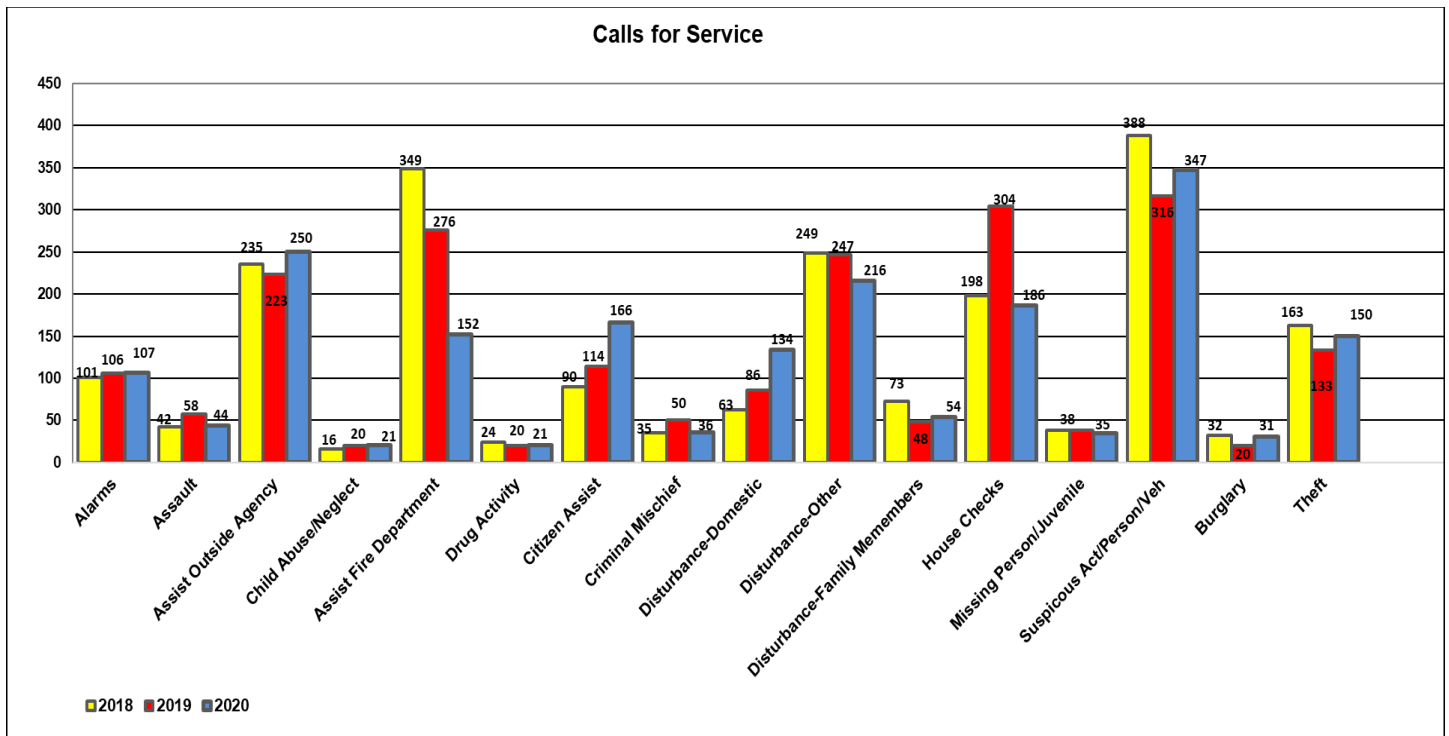
The Ralston Police Department has always striven to provide the opportunity for our officers to receive the most up-to-date and relevant training available to allow them to do their jobs most effectively. Training allows officers to be knowledgeable on new trends and current best practices in a variety of fields which allows them to perform their duties more effectively and more safely. Not only does training build knowledge, but it also trains the mind and body how to respond to situations in a fraction of the time it would take without training. Despite many different trainings being canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, RPD's training hours increased by 11.8% in 2020 from 2019. Training topics that are mandated to occur annually include defensive tactics, firearms, emergency vehicle operations, child abuse, and domestic violence. Along with these mandated training sessions, the department takes pride in providing officers training to enhance their abilities to perform their jobs, as well as career advancement. Many training hours are spent to give officers more knowledge on different aspects of law enforcement. This year officers received training in behavioral health response, responding to individuals in crisis, TacMed, tactical entry and active shooter response, excited delirium, professional policing and the public, interview and interrogations, ambush survival, diversity training, and a variety of others. Our officers attended a VirTra300 training which put them in a simulator to work on threat recognition, de-escalation, and other situations that arise for law enforcement around the country every day. RPD officers also received Fair and Impartial Policing training again this year. This curriculum teaches officers about implicit bias, how implicit biases can affect decision making, and how to overcome these biases. It also teaches about the effects of police interactions on police legitimacy. These trainings went above and beyond what is required by the state, but gives our officers the tools and knowledge to perform at a high level. Each year our officers receive significantly more training than the state required 20 hours of continuing education.





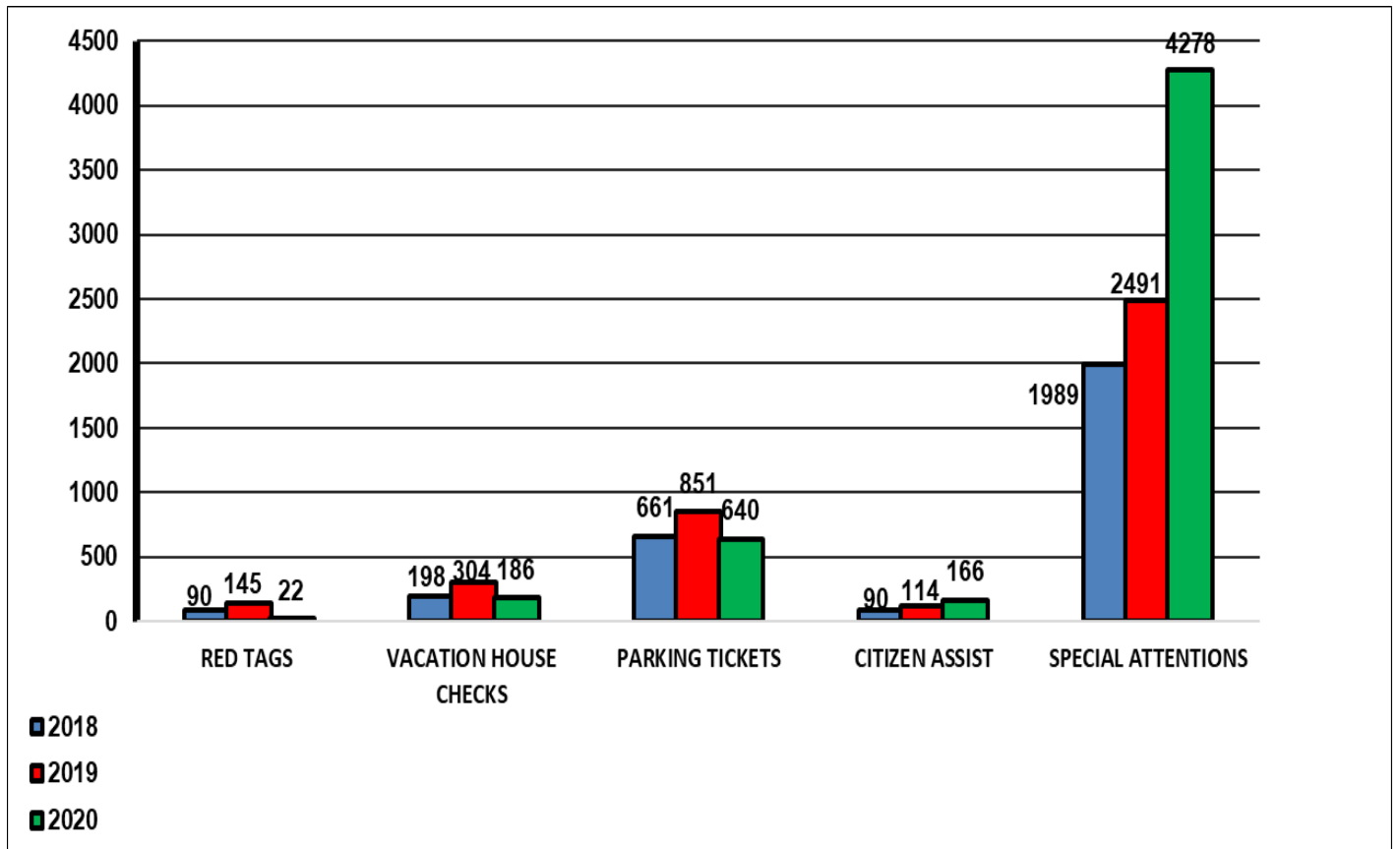
# Calls For Service

Calls for service include everything our officers do on a daily basis, excluding traffic stops. In 2020 Ralston officers responded to 9,916 calls for service, an increase of 63% from 2019. The worldwide pandemic had an affect on this total. Our officers conducted a huge number of compliance checks and special attentions during various parts of the year due to COVID-19. Every time an officer responds to a call, makes contact with a citizen, checks a business, writes red tags, blue tags or parking tickets, does school patrols, or conducts any type of special attention, it is considered a call for service. The graph below only demonstrates (17) major categories or 15% of the 109 categories of calls tracked this year. The following page will break down several miscellaneous categories that are still considered calls for service, such as Citizen Assists and Vacation House Checks. Although some numbers below remained similar to previous years, some increases and decreases stand out. Our officers assisted the fire department less in 2020 in an effort to prevent the spread of COVID. We assisted the fire department 152 times, a decrease of almost 45% from 2019. RPD saw a 55.8% increase in Domestic Disturbances in 2020. With many people staying home and being in the same home with family members for a long period of time, it is logical to see an increase in this category.



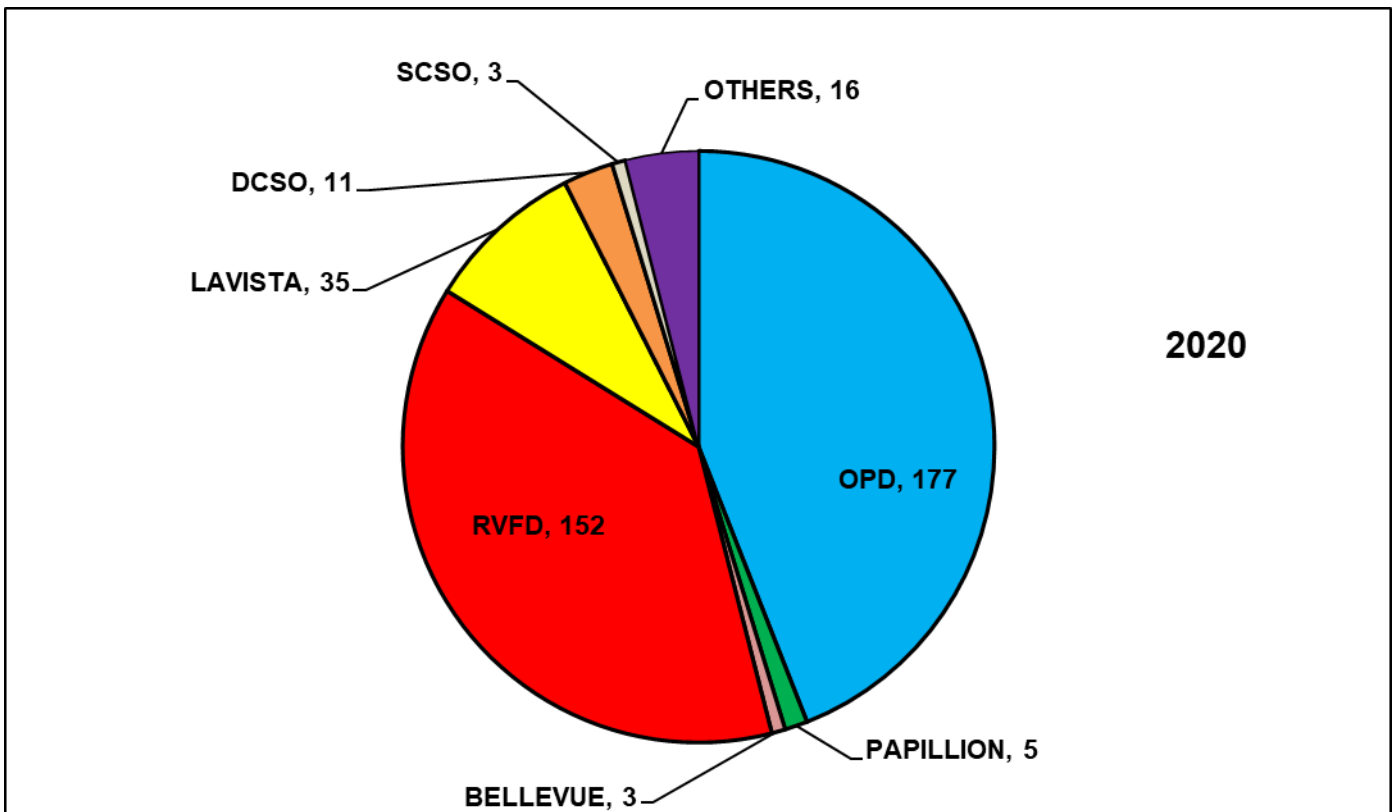
## Miscellaneous Activity

Of the 9,916 calls for service our officers handled in 2020, several are listed below as miscellaneous activity. These are broken down separately due to their significance to keeping the City of Ralston a safe place to live. Special attentions can be anything from watching an open or closed business for suspicious activity, to conducting traffic enforcement on streets or intersections that have received complaints, to driving neighborhoods at night looking for unusual activity or open doors on cars or garages, or patrolling any of our local schools for traffic, pedestrian or criminal activity. Special attentions increased 71.7% from 2019. These included the proactive activity listed above, but it also included a large number of compliance checks for COVID-19 throughout the year. All of these activities are vital to keep residents of Ralston safe. Red tags are placed on vehicles on public property that are in violation of city ordinances. Blue cards are completed by officers to document code violations such as inoperable or unregistered vehicles parked for extended periods, or houses that are unkempt or are a nuisance to the neighborhood. Enforcing code violations increases the public's positive perception of the image and livability of the City. Vacation house checks is a service the department offers to citizens who would like us to keep watch of their homes while they are away. Due to many people staying home for a majority of 2020, house checks also declined by almost 39%. Many times, our officers assist citizens with a variety of things which are not categorized under criminal activity. These activities are categorized as Citizen Assists. 2020 saw an increase of 45.6% in this category in 2020 from 2019.



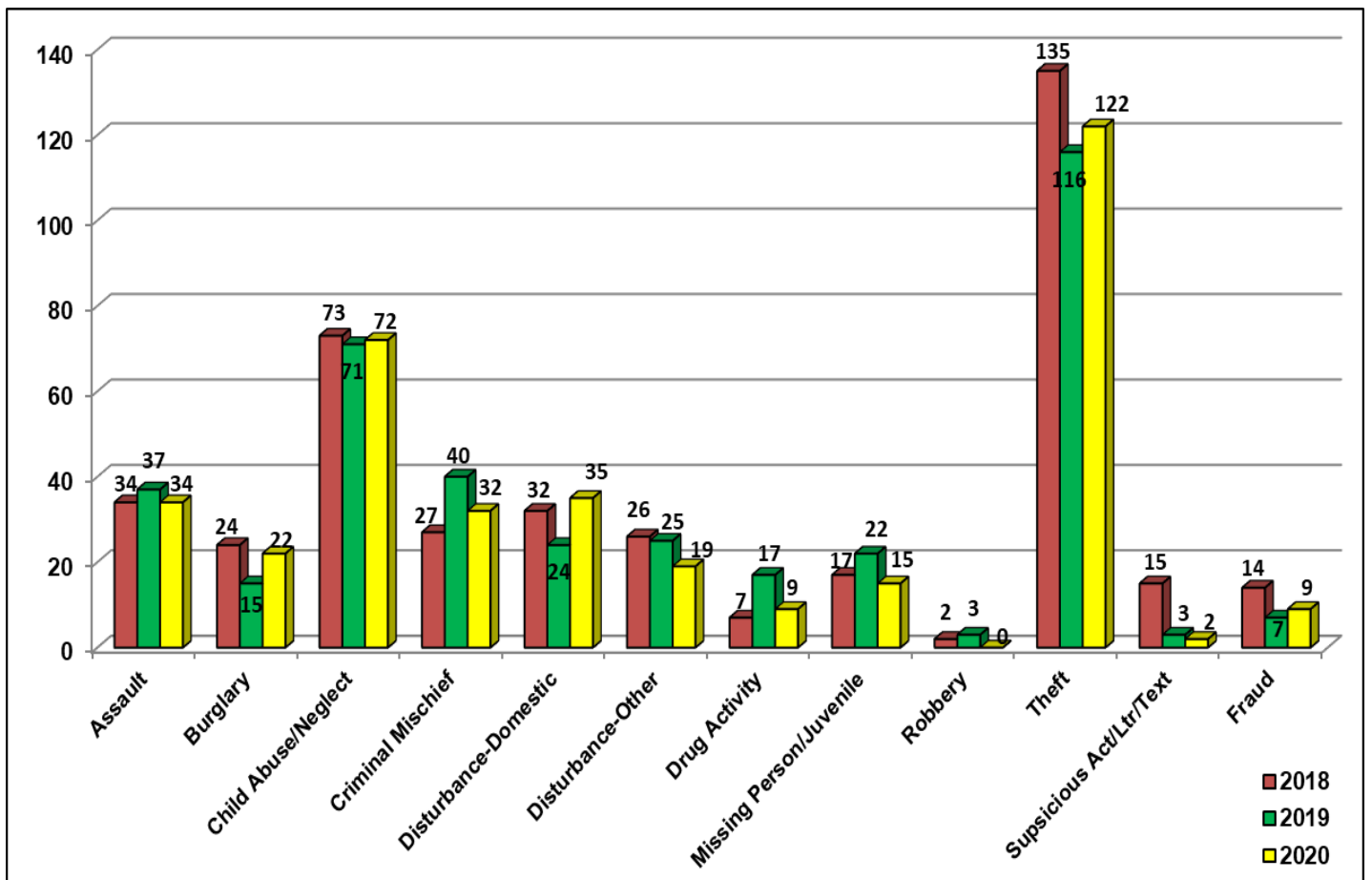
# Assist Other Agencies

The Ralston Police Department takes pride in the fact that not only do our officers handle a large call load for this City, but they also assist other agencies in their duties. Our officers responded to 152 calls for service to assist RVFD in 2020. This is a decrease of nearly 45%. As mentioned in the Calls for Service category, the lower number of fire department assists was to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Assisting the Omaha Police Department also continues to show a high number of calls, due largely to their shared borders with Ralston, as well as their high call load. Many times, our officers are very close to a call in Omaha, and the OPD officers are responding from a greater distance. In these cases, our officers are able to respond and get law enforcement on scene in a very short amount of time. RPD also assisted several agencies on numerous occasions throughout the year by providing our Mobile AFIS fingerprint device to assist in identifying victims of crimes, accidents or suspects under arrest. RPD officers assisted the Omaha Police Department 177 times in 2020, an increase of 19.6% from 2019. RPD officers also assisted the La Vista Police Department 35 times in 2020, a 40% increase from 2019. As the graph shows, our department assisted various other Metro law enforcement throughout the year. The department is always willing to help any outside agency that requests our assistance.



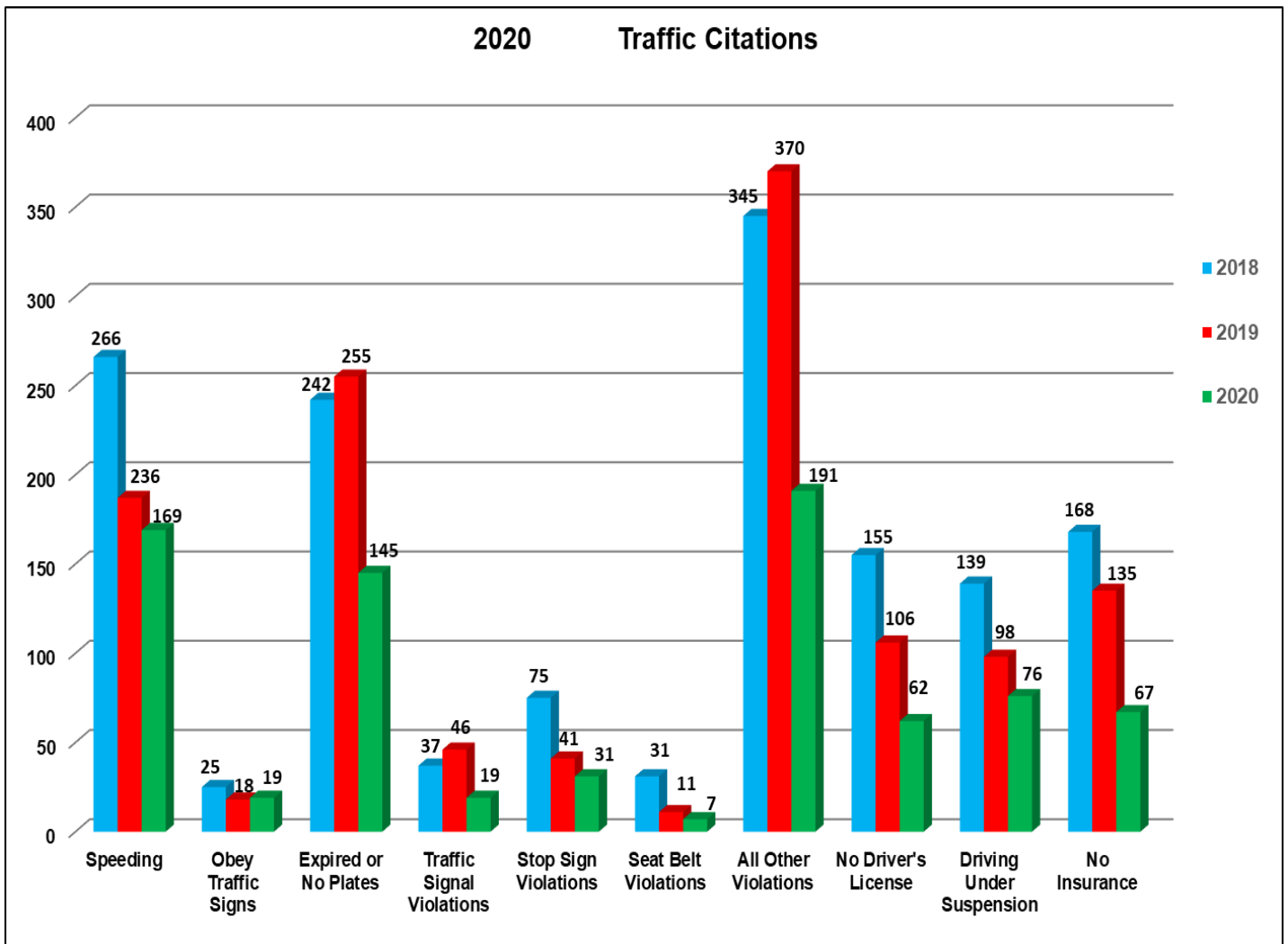
# Incidents

An incident is a situation where a formal report was completed with a case number assigned to it. Not all types of incidents are reflected on this graph. However, it does reflect the most common reports taken. In all, the Ralston Police Department had 898 incidents in 2020, a decrease of 10% from 2019. Sometimes officers are dispatched to a call, and later learn through their investigation that another crime actually occurred. Sometimes people want to file a police report for an incident; however, they do not wish to pursue criminal charges or initiate a criminal investigation. These are the types of things which are categorized as an Incident. Although 2020 was an odd year, the small increases and decreases in these twelve major categories of incidents remained similar to years past.



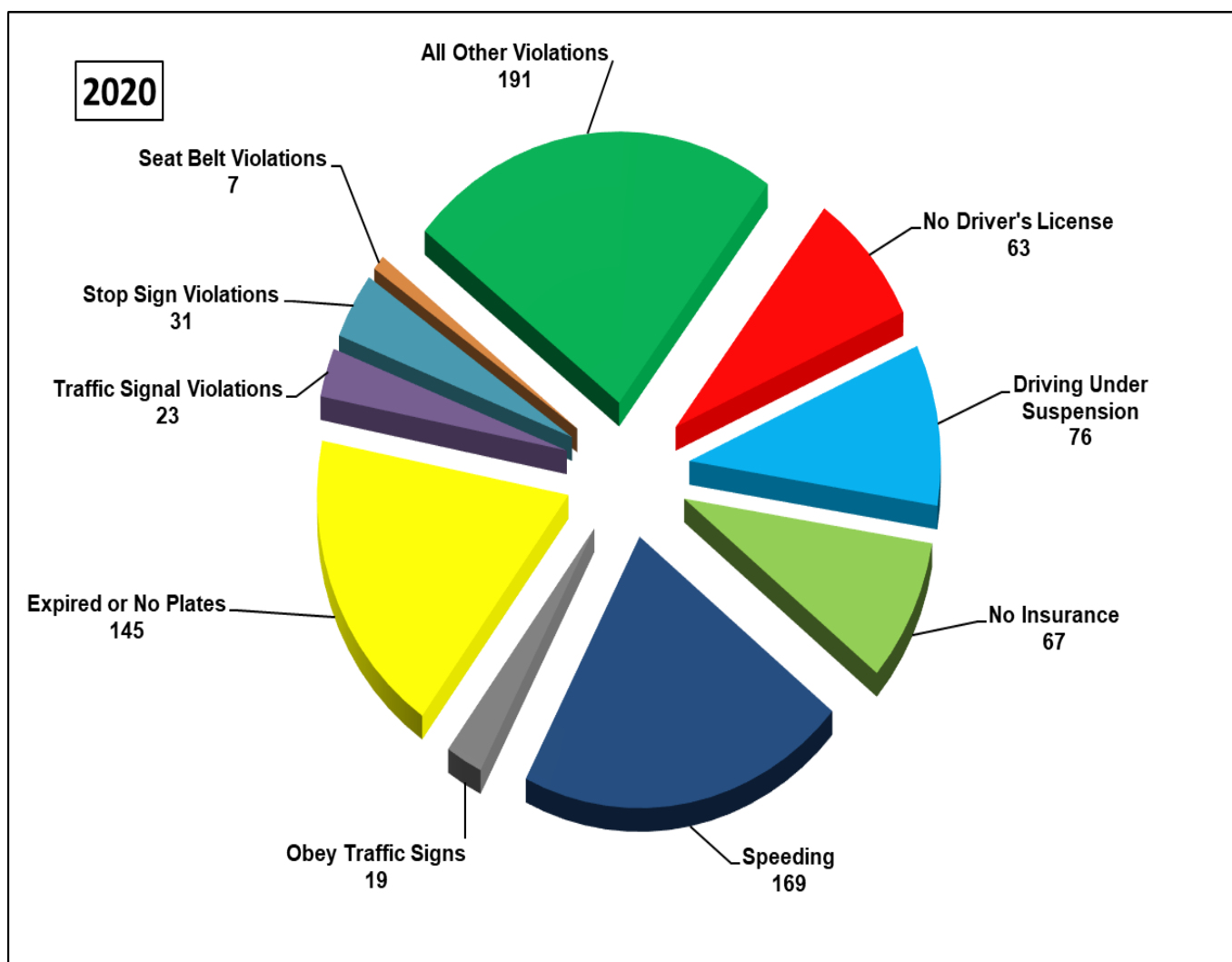
# Citations

Ralston officers conducted 1,307 traffic stops in 2020, a decrease of 44.7% from 2019. Based on this decrease, it is only logical that the number of traffic citations issued showed large decreases as well, from 1,267 in 2019 to 791 in 2020. As it has been shown throughout this report, the worldwide pandemic had a massive effect on the department's traffic stop numbers in 2020. There were far less vehicles on the roadway during the height of the pandemic. Another factor in the decrease was the "unknown" of COVID when it first appeared. Officers did not stop making traffic stops at any point during 2020; however, more serious or egregious violations were confronted at the onset of the pandemic. As we have learned more about the virus and obtained more PPE gear, the number of traffic stops gradually increased in the latter part of 2020. There was also a moratorium on violations involving expired license plates for a large portion of the year due to DMV's not being open to get vehicles licensed. Along with that, not all traffic stops result in traffic citations. Officers realize that educating a violator can be very effective in changing driving behavior. In these situations, written and verbal warnings are used to inform drivers of their errors and help provide them with an opportunity to correct the issue without a fine being associated with it.



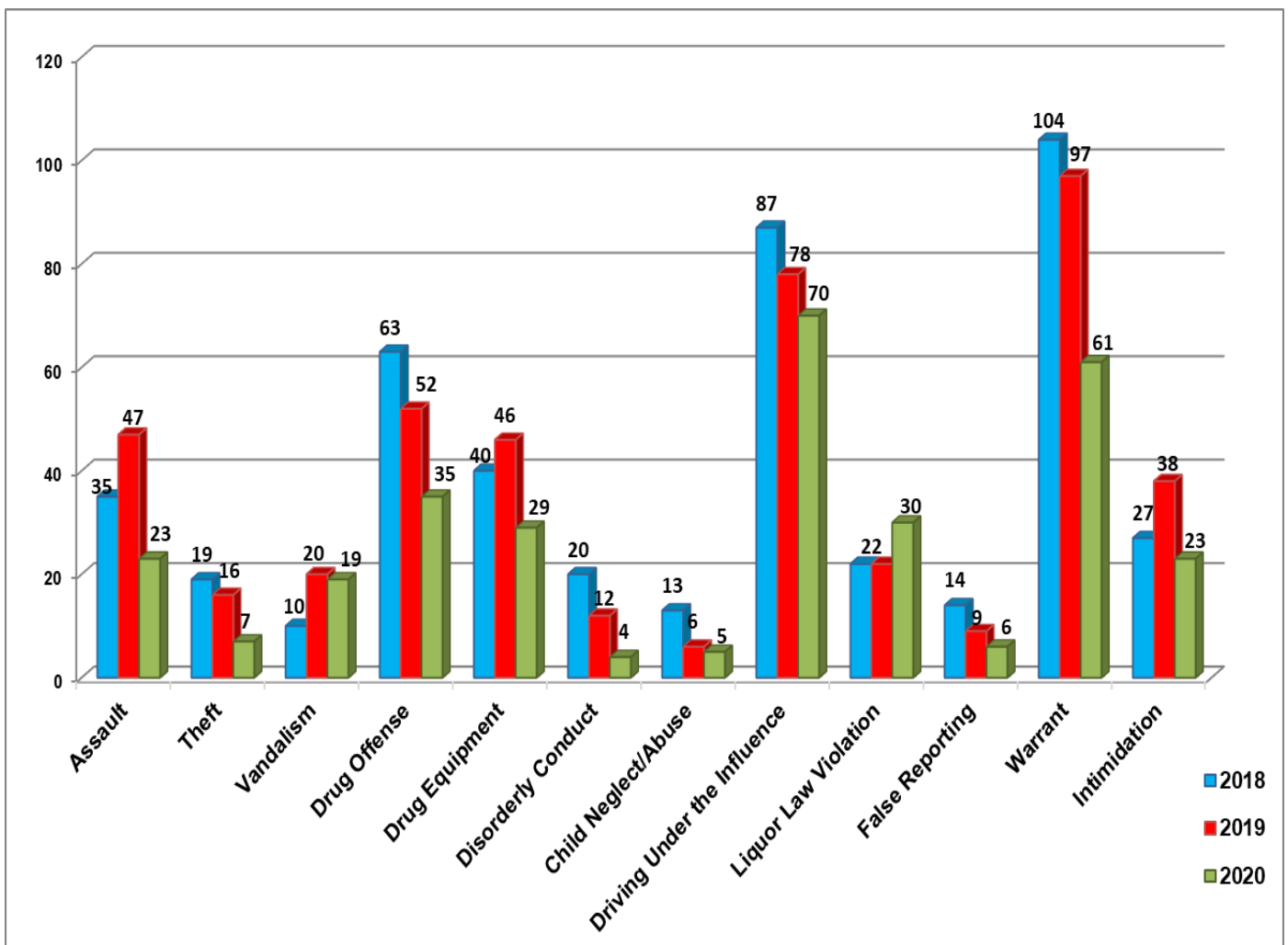
# Citations

Officers are encouraged to approach traffic enforcement in a broad fashion, which focuses on many types of traffic violations. As a result, there are times a single traffic stop for an infraction leads to multiple charges or offenses. Sometimes the initial reason for the stop results in warnings, but leads to citations for other violations found during the stop. An example of this would be a driver being pulled over for only having one functional headlight on their vehicle, but the officer finds the driver's license is suspended. Conversely, not all traffic stops result in a citation being issued. The department's goal is to educate drivers on traffic law, and correct improper driving behaviors. Many times this goal can be accomplished through verbal or written warnings as opposed to citations.



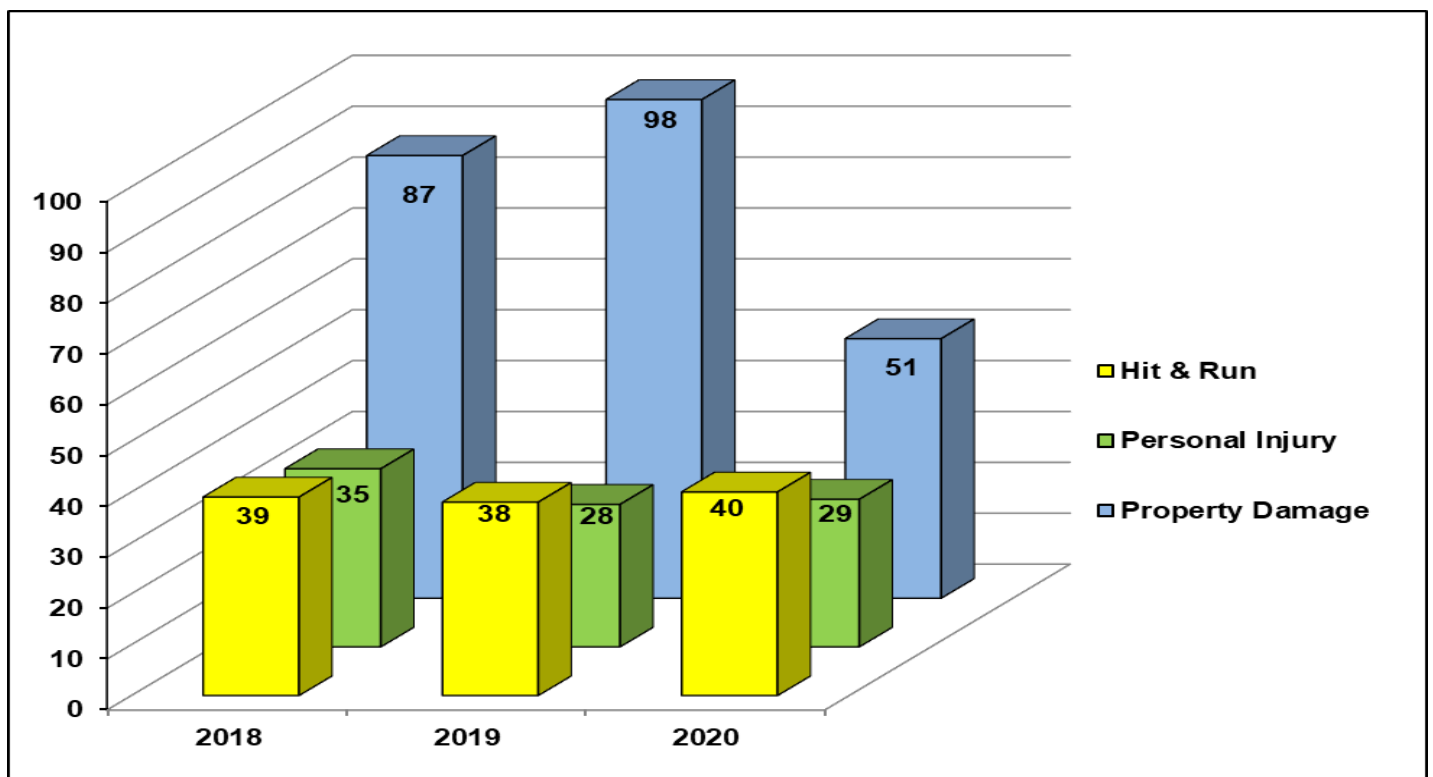
# Arrests

Officers made a total of 531 arrests in 2020, a decrease of 26.7%% from 2019. Arrests in nearly every category decreased in 2020. Each year sees an ebb and flow in the number of arrests in each of the categories listed. Arrests in some of the categories were similar to arrests in 2019; however, others showed significant decreases. Assault (-51%), Theft (-56%), Drug Offenses (-33%), Disorderly Conduct (-67%), Warrant Arrests (-37%), and Intimidation (-39%) arrests all showed marked declines from 2019. Some of these declines can be attributed to people staying home for many months during 2020. The decrease in warrant arrests are likely the result of far less court hearings, decreasing the likelihood of warrants being issued for charges such as Failure to Appear. Some categories remained similar in arrest numbers from 2019. Vandalism, Child Abuse/Neglect, DUI, and False Reporting arrests were all similar to 2019 results. Arrests for Liquor Law Violations, such as Open Alcohol Container, increased by 36% in 2020.



# Accidents

The Ralston Police Department investigates many traffic accidents every year. These accidents are broken down into three categories: Property Damage, Personal Injury (including fatalities), and Hit and Run. Although two categories showed slight increases, accidents in Ralston overall were down 27% from 2019. We had one (1) additional Personal Injury accident (+3.6%) and two (2) additional Hit and Run accidents (+5.3%) compared to 2019. Officers investigated fifty-one (51) Property Damage accidents in 2020 compared with ninety-eight (98) in 2019, a decrease of 48%. Our department maintains one officer who is highly specialized in this area, and he serves on the South Metro Crash Response Team (SMCRT). This team investigates serious accidents in the South metro area, part of an inter-local agreement. Thankfully, this team was not needed in Ralston in 2020. Of the 80 property damage and personal injury accidents combined, roughly 73% of them occurred on or near the perimeter main thoroughfares of 72<sup>nd</sup> Street, 84<sup>th</sup> Street, and Harrison Street which mainly border Omaha and LaVista. More importantly, nearly 90% of all Personal injury accidents occurred on these highly traveled thoroughfares, and not inside the main residential roads of Ralston.





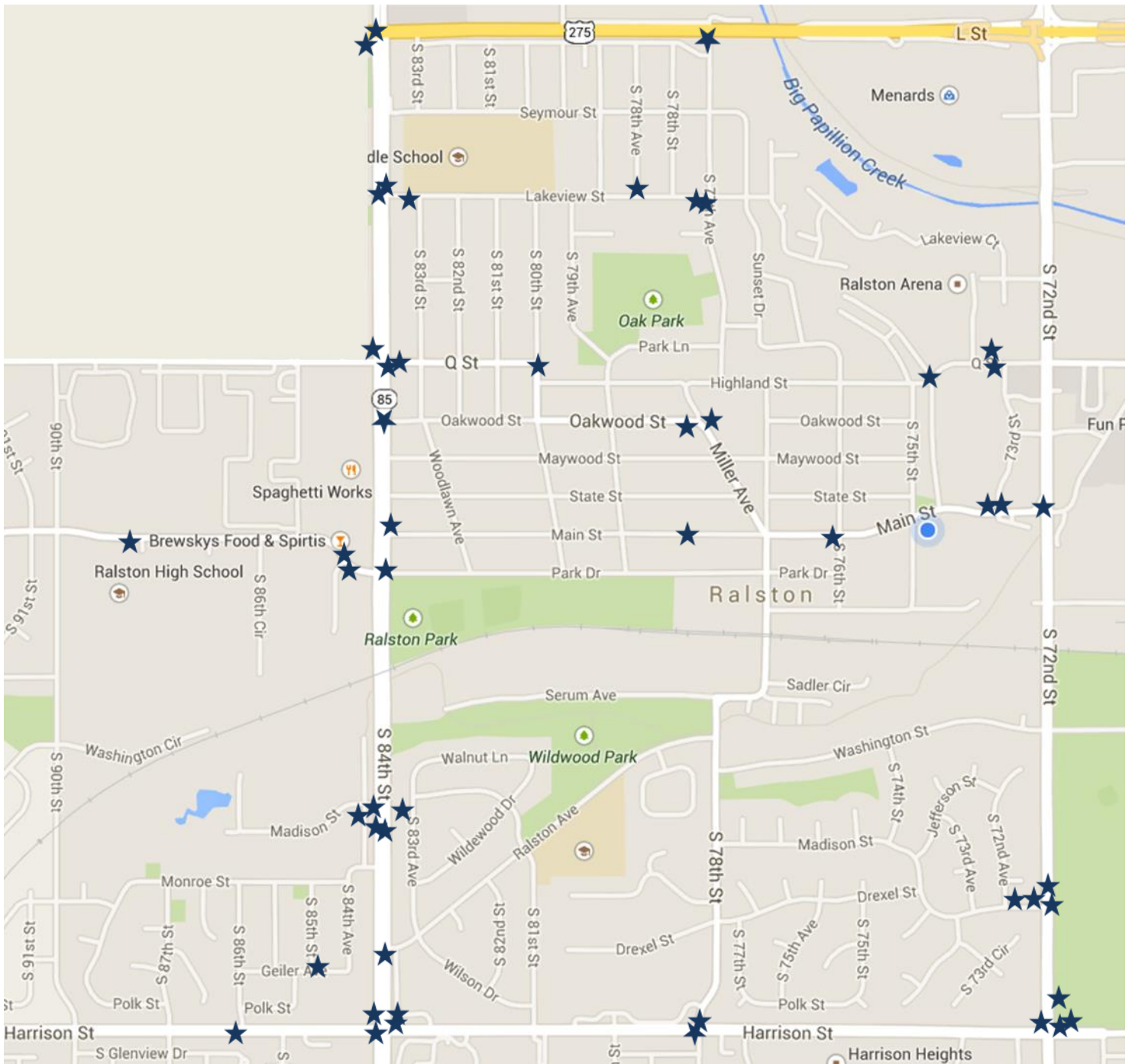
# Notable Events

January	Sgt. Leifeld and Ofc. Jepsen are awarded with Life Saving awards after performing CPR on an unresponsive female.
February	Officers arrest an individual for Felon in Possession of a Firearm, Possession of a Short Shotgun, and Possession of Controlled Substances (Heroin and Methamphetamine).
March	The COVID-19 pandemic hits the Metro and causes many changes to occur in Ralston.
April	Brickway Brewery donates hand sanitizer to the police department after there is a shortage due to COVID-19.  Ralston Area Chamber of Commerce donated hand sanitizer made by UNO.  Officers used our newly acquired mobile AFIS machine to assist outside agencies in identifying unknown persons on multiple occasions.
May	Officers arrest a person for Possession of Marijuana with Intent to Deliver and Possession of a Firearm with a Controlled Substance.  Officer Kanngieser uses Narcan to revive a party who overdosed on opiates, saving the person's life.  Sgt. Leifeld, Ofc. Brown, and Ofc. Batterman receives the MADD Outstanding Adult DUI Enforcement Team Award  Ofc. Brown receives the MADD Outstanding Adult DUI Enforcement Award.  Officer Byers uses Narcan to revive a party who overdosed on opiates, saving the person's life.  Axon donates hand sanitizer and masks to the department due to the pandemic.  RPD participates in the spring Click It or Ticket traffic initiative.
July	For the first time ever, Ralston cancels its famous Independence Day celebration due to the worldwide pandemic.
August	RPD participates in the first Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over traffic initiative of the year.
September	Officers attend the funeral of Lincoln Police Investigator Mario Herrera after he was killed in the line of duty.
October	Ralston participated in Drug Take Back with Walgreens .  RPD participated in the Pink Patch Project
November	Officers participated in the final Click It or Ticket traffic enforcement campaign of the year.  Officers participated in No Shave November, with the proceeds going to Project Harmony.
December	RPD participated in the Drive Sober or Get Pulled Over traffic initiative.

# Training

January	CPR/Narcan Training
February	Fair and Impartial Policing Instructor Course
March	CIT Training Advanced Roadside Impairment Detection Mental Health
April	VirTra 300
May	CQB Instructor Emergency Vehicle Operations
June	Firearms Qualifications TacMed Tactical Entry/Active Shooter Response
July	Excited Delirium Active Shooter Response
August	Child Abuse Investigations Profiling Teen Killers Ambush Survival Evidence Based Interview and Interrogation
September	Firearms NCIP Conference Crisis Response: De-escalation
October	Foot Pursuit Training Fair and Impartial Policing Street Crimes Exploration of Diversity and Inclusion Defensive Tactics
November	Intermediate Crash Investigations
December	Professional Policing and the Public Domestic Violence Investigations Criminal Interdiction

# Property Damage Accidents by Location 2020



# Personal Injury Accidents by Location 2020

