

# **SEWARD POLICE DEPARTMENT**



## **2024 ANNUAL REPORT**

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*City of Seward*  
**Police Department**  
**Chief Brian W. Peters**

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January 16, 2025

Dear Mayor Eickmeier, City Council Members,  
And Citizens of Seward,

As we look forward to 2025, I would like to take a moment to reflect over the past year and provide a brief overview of our accomplishments in 2024. In the future, we will present an annual report to you, highlighting the previous calendar year.

Our department started 2024 on a high note with the hiring of Arcellus (Anthony) Heard III. Originally hailing from the St. Louis area, Anthony attended Concordia University where he majored in Criminal Justice and Biology, and was a member of the Bulldog football team. We hired Anthony following his graduation from Concordia in December, and he reported to the Nebraska Law Enforcement Training Center (NLETC) on January 1, 2024. Anthony graduated from the Training Center in April, and recently completed his Field Training. He currently works nights on Sergeant Wiedemeyer's shift. With Officer Heard now working on his own, our department is now fully staffed!

Another change in staffing occurred recently as well. Sergeant Allison Sommerfeld requested a voluntary demotion to Officer. This was strictly a personal decision by Allison. Although she will be missed as a supervisor, she will provide a wealth of knowledge and experience as a Patrol Officer.

Jon Wiedemeyer, a 14-year veteran of the department, was promoted to fill the open Sergeant position. Jon brings a great deal of knowledge and experience to the position. We look forward to Sgt. Wiedemeyer's development as a supervisor and being a valued member of the Command Staff.

Seward's annual July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration was quite a success again this year. It seemed we had the largest crowd since before the pandemic. There were no major incidents reported and it appeared as though all our visitors had a great time.

It is an honor for our department to serve the City of Seward. It is with great pleasure that I present to you the 2024 Seward Police Department Annual Report.

Respectfully,

*Brian Peters*

Brian W. Peters  
Chief of Police



## Mission Statement

*The mission of the Seward Police Department is to protect life and property and to maintain order within the City while assuring fair and respectful treatment of everyone.*

*We shall respond to calls for service with immediacy; we shall treat all individuals with respect, dignity and fairness; we shall continually seek to improve ourselves professionally through training; we shall uphold ourselves to the highest ethical standards; and we shall never become complacent with respect to our mission, values, or those we serve.*





**Brian Peters**  
Chief



**Michael Hammond**  
Captain



**Russell Frazey**  
Sergeant



**Jonathon Wiedemeyer**  
Sergeant



**Alejandro Garcia**  
Officer



**Anthony Heard**  
Officer



**Bryce Johnson**  
Officer



**Jarod Phillips**  
Officer



**Zachary Pilcher**  
Officer



**Lacy Samek**  
Officer



**Allison Sommerfeld**  
Officer



**Chris Waldron**  
Officer



**Shannon Arena**  
Community Service Officer



**Jodie Niebrugge**  
Administrative Assistant



# Organizational Chart

Brian Peters  
*Chief of Police*

Michael Hammond  
*Captain*

Jodie Niebrugge  
*Administrative Secretary*

## Day Shift

Bryce Johnson  
*Officer*

Allison Sommerfeld  
*Officer*

Alex Garcia  
*Officer*

Zachary Pilcher  
*Officer*

Shannon Arena  
*Community Service  
Officer*

## Night Shift

### A

Russell Frazey  
*Sergeant*

Chris Waldron  
*Officer*

Jarod Phillips  
*Officer*

### B

Jonathan Wiedemeyer  
*Sergeant*

Lacy Samek  
*Officer*

Anthony Heard  
*Officer*



# Training & Education

## Training Instructors

Sgt. Frazey: Training Program Supervisor; Taser;

Sgt. Wiedemeyer: Firearms; Emergency Vehicle Operations

Ofc. Johnson: Firearms; Field Training Officer

Ofc. Garcia: DARE; Defensive Tactics

Ofc. Samek: Anti-Bias

Ofc. Sommerfeld: DARE; Evidence

Ofc. Phillips: Emergency Vehicle Operations

Ofc. Pilcher: Taser

Ofc. Waldron: Evidence

## Annual Training

Nebraska State Statutes require law enforcement officers to attend a minimum of 32 hours of annual training to retain their Law Enforcement Certification. Required training include the following: de-escalation, mental health, and substance abuse; anti-bias and implicit bias; officer wellness; legal updates (i.e., new legislation, 1<sup>st</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> Amendment issues, etc.); firearm qualifications; and a review of our vehicle pursuit policy.

Additionally, our department requires officers to attend annual training on the use of Tasers; Criminal Justice Information System (CJIS) Security training; CPR/AED/First Aid; Pursuit Driving/Stop Stick training (held bi-annually at the Seward Airport.)

Officers may also submit requests for training opportunities in subject areas of interest to them. In determining whether to authorize these training opportunities, we evaluate the costs involved (registration, lodging, meals, lodging, etc.); detrimental effects on shift scheduling during their absence; and overall value the training provides the officer and department.

Acknowledgement of annual training is submitted to the Nebraska Law Enforcement Training Center (NLETC) by December 31<sup>st</sup> of each year. Departments are required to maintain records of all training, which are subject to audit by the NLETC to ensure compliance.

### **Education:**

In an attempt to improve officer recruitment and retention, the State of Nebraska provides 100% tuition waivers to officers seeking their undergraduate degree at any State university, college, or community college. This benefit applies to officer's dependents as well!

I am pleased that we have two officers currently taking advantage of this incredible opportunity. Sgt. Wiedemeyer is pursuing his Criminal Justice degree by taking on-line classes at Wayne State College, while Capt. Hammond has a son currently attending UNL. I anticipate that Hammond's younger son will be using the tuition benefit following his graduation from high school next year.

Sgt. Frazey is pursuing his Master's Degree from Wayne State College. Although the tuition benefit from the State is not applicable to post-graduate degrees, he is taking advantage of the 50% tuition reimbursement through the City.

I commend both Sgt. Frazey and Sgt. Wiedemeyer for efforts. Successful completion of their programs will enhance their professional development, enabling them to be more effective supervisors, managers, and leaders for the Seward Police Department.





## Community Policing

**Run With the Cops** – Spearheaded by Officer Waldron, our First Annual Run with the Cops event was a huge success. About 90 runners participated in either the 5k or 1m walk/run, which raised \$2,500 for Team Mates. This year's run is scheduled for Saturday, April 12<sup>th</sup> at 8:00 am...we'd love to have you join us!

**July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration** – We had another successful event this year. The crowds were the largest since pre-COVID. I am honored to be the City's representative to the July 4<sup>th</sup> Committee. This is a dedicated group of citizens who take great pride in Seward and the historical significance of our annual July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration. Plans are taking shape for our next celebration, during which time the World's Largest Time Capsule will be opened and its contents displayed. (Anyone interested in a used 1975 Toyota Corolla?)

**Hydrant Party** – On August 17<sup>th</sup>, we joined Seward Fire & Rescue in hosting a swim party at Seward Elementary School. Kids were able to splash in the collapsible water tank while the aerial truck sprayed water down onto the parking lot for them to run through. What a great way to end summer vacation!

**D.A.R.E.** – The D.A.R.E. program returned to Seward area schools 13 years ago. Officers Sommerfeld and Garcia are both certified as instructors and current split the schools equally between them.

**School Engagement and Safety** – The Seward Police Department is proud of our working relationships with our local schools. Not only do we engage in high visibility patrol before and after school, we actually spend time inside the buildings. This allows us to build strong relationships with the administration, faculty, staff, and students. Captain Hammond and I are members of the Seward Public School Safety Committee and conduct walk-throughs of each building to ensure we are providing a safe and healthy environment for our students. Officer Garcia also meets with each school administrator to discuss emergency planning. He also observes and evaluates safety drills in order to identify any deficiencies.

**Purple Bin Project** - October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, when we raise awareness of domestic violence and support those affected by it. This year, we joined Hope Crisis Center in support of the Purple Bin Project. During the month of October, a purple bin was placed in our lobby to collect donations of essential items for victims and survivors of domestic violence. These items included hygiene products, new clothing, household cleaning products, and other necessities needed when victims of domestic violence are forced from their homes. By working together, Hope Crisis Center and the Seward Police Department aim to create a stronger support network for victims and survivors of domestic violence in our area.

**CASA's Scare at the Fair** – This is a fun event held at the Ag Pavilion prior to Halloween. Scare at the Fair provides a safe environment for children to Trick-or-Treat. To ensure an all-inclusive event, the first hour is for families with special needs. During this time, we speak quietly and do not activate any lights or sirens. We appreciate the opportunity to connect with all the kids and their families. We also get to see some cool costumes!

**Holiday Festival and Parade** – This event has been growing each year since its inception. Like the July 4<sup>th</sup> Celebration, it takes nearly year-round planning. Having an evening parade presents unique safety challenges. We have enjoyed collaborating with the Festival Committee, particularly Councilperson Megan Kahler, in creating a fun, family friendly, yet safe event. Some examples include shortening the parade route so that those marching, walking, or riding a float in the parade have a well-lit area to egress. Another is to encourage parade participants passing out treats to have walkers close to the curb passing them out rather than throwing from a vehicle to keep kids from getting too close to moving vehicles.

**Stuff the Cruiser** –Seward Rotary Club and Seward PD again partnered with Wall Mart, Dollar General, Tractor Supply, and Gold Star Martial Arts to collect toys for those less fortunate in our community during the holiday season. Always a heart-warming experience, particularly when seeing the joy on the faces of children who are donating toys for other kids. This year we served over 60 families and provided gifts for 130 children!

**Pup Cup Promotion** – Jodie Niebrugge and CSO Arena developed this promotion as a way to encourage people to get their dogs licensed. They reached out to Cross Creek Animal Health Center, Seward Animal Hospital, Alps Bark Park, and Blue River Pet Rescue to secure donations, which funded the Pup Cups. When a pet owner came in to purchase their annual dog license, they received a frozen treat, tote bag with coupons to have their dog micro-chipped, collapsible water bowl, fetch toy, paw socks, waste baggies, and a copy of City Dog Ordinances. Kudos to Jodie and Shannon!

**Operation Lifesaver** – We are excited to bring Project Lifesaver to our area. The goal of Project Lifesaver is to locate “at-risk” individuals who are prone to wandering. A transmitter device worn on the wrist emits a signal specifically assigned to that person. Using a special antenna, we are able to then track the signal and locate the missing

person Thanks to a generous grant from the Julia Rose Foundation we received all of the necessary equipment and training. Currently there is one family signed up and have experienced no issues. We would like to sign up more families and plan to promote Operation Lifesaver through the schools, churches and social media.

**Pics from 2024**



Stuff the Cruiser



Hydrant Party





Run With the Cops – Check presentation to TeamMates



Making new friends during 4<sup>th</sup> of July Parade!

OCTOBER IS DOMESTIC VIOLENCE AWARENESS MONTH!



# The Purple Bin Project

Laundry soap	Paper bowls
Hand soap	Paper towels
Dish soap	Kitchen trash bags
Clorox wipes	Bath towels
Body lotion	Hair brushes
Conditioner	Pillows
Plastic silverware	Gallon/quart storage bags
Napkins	Walmart gift cards
Kitchen/Bathroom Cleaner	Gas gift cards



In Collaboration with the Seward Police Department



Purple Bin Project



## GET YOUR DOG SOME SWAG WITH A 2025 CITY TAG

**Register your dog at the Seward Police Department in January and receive a FREE pup cup for your fur buddy plus a goodie bag for YOU!**

Pup Cup Promotion





Ofc. Garcia & Waldron - Safety Talk at Head Start



Promotion Ceremony for Sgt. Wiedemeyer



## Vehicle Inventory

<u>Unit #</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Make</u>	<u>Model</u>	<u>VIN</u>	<u>Mileage</u>
1	2021	Ford	Explorer	1FM5K8AB8MGB53619	38,960
2	2022	Ford	Explorer	1FM5K8AB0NGB80928	27,574
3	2023	Ford	Explorer Hybrid	1FM5K8AW5PNA09030	7,676
4	2021	Ford	Explorer	1FM5K8AB5LGD01112	58,464
5	2018	Ford	Explorer	1FM5K8AT1JGC74724	58,884
6	2022	Ford	Explorer Hybrid	1FM5K8AW2NNA04543	12,886
CSO	2024	Ford	Ranger 4x4 Pickup	1FTER4PH1RLE48743	515





## Statistics

The following section is a brief overview of our statistics from 2024. Law enforcement agencies report their statistics to the Nebraska Incident-Based Reporting System (NIBRS) on a monthly basis. The Nebraska Crime Commission (NCC) compiles and analyzes this data then posts an annual statistical summary on their website. This information provides a snapshot for agencies to view such things as crime trends, and department employment data.

Although data for 2024 is not yet available, the following information is from the NCC 2023 Summary Report:

- There are 31 First Class Cities (pop. over 5,000) in Nebraska. Seward ranks 21<sup>st</sup> by population.
- Seward ranks 5<sup>th</sup> lowest in offense rate (13.99 per 1,000 pop), tied with Norfolk. The four cities with lower offense rates are Gering (6.06), Schuyler (11.22), Fremont (12.07), and Wayne (13.35). The city with the highest rate is Scottsbluff (67.61). This data based on **reported** offenses only.

The following pages will include statistical data on calls for service, citations issued, and traffic accidents for Seward PD.



## Calls for Service (Past 4 Years)

2024.....	7595
2023.....	6922
2022.....	6900
2021.....	5799





# Citations

## Criminal

Animal Cruelty/Neglect	2
Drug Violation	45
Drug Paraphernalia	33
Assault	23
Weapons Violation	8
Disturbing the Peace	11
Theft	13
Stolen Vehicle	3
Criminal Mischief	2
Trespassing	2
Fraud	1
Liquor Violation	12
Liquor Violation - MIP	13
Drive Under Suspension	25
Drive Under Influence (Alcohol/Drug)	24
Transport Child While Intoxicated	2
Child Abuse/Neglect/Delinquency	15
Protection Order Violation	5
Obstruct/Resist Officer	4
False Report	4
Aid & Abet	1
Littering	1
Tamper With Evidence	1
Election Violation	1
Uncontrollable Juvenile	1

## Traffic

No Insurance	43
Registration Violation	30
Operator's License Violation	22
Speed	40
Careless/Reckless/Race Violation	15
Follow Too Closely	2
Vehicle Light Violation	6
Lane Violation	6
Fail To Yield	8
Fail to Signal	2
Traffic Control Violation	23
School Bus Arm Violation	16
Safety Glass Violation	2
Muffler Violation	4
Seatbelt Violation	1
Child Restraint Violation	3
Refuse DUI Test	6
Fail to Report Accident	1

## City Ordinance

Dog At Large, Barking, No Lic.	7
Tobacco Violation	10

**Total** 499



## Traffic Accidents (Past 2 years)

### 2024

Responded, no report taken	72
Property Damage	86
Hit & Run	5
Injury	6
Fatality	<u>0</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>169</b>

### 2023

Responded, no report taken	58
Property Damage	76
Hit & Run	14
Injury	18
Fatality	<u>0</u>
<b>Total</b>	<b>166</b>